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HERBERT ATHERTON,

OR

SOWING BESIDE ALL WATERS

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"WREATHS AND BRANCHES FOR THE CHURCH,"

"CONSECRATED TALENTS," &c.

*Cornelia L. Atherton*

"Where the little brook is flowing,  
Where the mighty river rolls,  
Bless'd are ye, in patience sowing,  
For the harvest day of souls."

NEW YORK:

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# HERBERT ATHERTON.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MORNING SERVICE AT ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH.

“ Within the Temple's very gates,  
We hear the world's tumultuous roar.”

It was a pleasant morning in May, when a young man of interesting appearance paused before one of the principal churches in a large city.

“ Can you tell me whether there will be service here to-day ?” he asked, addressing a coachman, who was seated upon the box of a carriage which was standing in front of the gate. The equipage was one of uncommon elegance,—a low, dark chariot of the most graceful form, drawn by black horses, the sombre appearance of the whole being only relieved by the silver mounting of the harness, and the richly cut lanterns. The coachman was in perfect keeping, being an undistinguishable mass of blackness, excepting the broad silver band around his bell-crowned hat. His manner, too, was an attempt at superior polite-



ness, as he said, in reply to the inquiry of the stranger,

"Certainly, sir, there is always service here every day at eleven o'clock;" and it was evident that he belonged to some family who considered it a virtue to be well posted up in church affairs.

"Thank you," said the questioner politely, as he entered the gate. It was still very early, for there was no one in the church but the party that had just alighted from the carriage without, and the sexton, who was busy in removing the benches, with which he had barricaded the entrance to the middle aisle.

"How provoking!" exclaimed one of the ladies, as she looked at an elegant little watch, to which dozens of small trinkets were suspended. "It is fifteen minutes to eleven, and we might have spent that time in shopping, instead of wasting it here."

The light tone in which these words were spoken evidently grated on the ear of the newcomer, for he looked after the tall elegant woman, as she walked haughtily up the aisle, with a glance of mingled pity and disapprobation, as if he thought it would require a much longer preparation to fit her heart for the service of that God who must be worshipped in spirit and in

truth. And then, turning to the sexton, he said in a low voice, "Will you have the kindness to tell the clergyman that a person desires to return thanks for recovery from sickness? I find that I have dropped the notice which I wrote to that effect."

The church was so frequented by strangers, that it had become necessary to place a row of seats in the centre of each aisle, which were wide enough for the accommodation of two persons; and to one of these, in the neighborhood of the chancel, the young man slowly directed his steps, and kneeling before it with the deepest reverence, became lost in devotion. He did not notice that the church was rapidly filling, or that no one besides, occupying the seats in the aisle, assumed the posture to which from childhood he had become accustomed. He only felt that after months of trial and sickness, he was again allowed to enter the house of his heavenly Father, which anywhere and under all circumstances was regarded as his dearest home. When, at last, he rose from his knees with his face glowing with emotion, he perceived a lad of about ten years old standing by him, who said, as he held the door of an adjacent pew open, "Mother wishes to know if you will sit with us. The seats

are more comfortable, and there is plenty of room." The offer was gratefully accepted, as there was only a middle-aged lady in dark mourning, and two little girls occupying the seat, to which he was so kindly invited.

When the services commenced, a clear, deep voice was heard, pitched slightly above the rest, and occasionally reading, by mistake, some of the responses of the clergyman, as if the speaker were more accustomed to leading, than joining in the devotions of a congregation. There was a deep fervency also observable in the manner in which he pronounced the "Amen" at the end of each prayer, and especially of that for recovery from sickness, which arrested the attention of the lady in whose pew he was seated. When the services were over, she was struck with the self-forgetfulness apparent in the length of his concluding prayer, and wondered what circumstances gave such peculiar earnestness to the stranger's whole manner and bearing.

At the door of the church, the young man paused, and turning to his courteous hostess, thanked her gracefully for her politeness, and asked if she could inform him whether Dr. Welford, the Rector of Christ Church, were at present in the city?

"I am sorry to say I do not know," she replied; "but I have been absent from town for many months, and only came back yesterday." Her face, which was deeply marked by sorrow, became additionally sad at these words, as if melancholy associations were attached to the absence of which she spoke, but she added quickly, "Oh, there is Mr. Melville, he is the senior warden of Dr. Welford's church, and can give you any information with regard to his movements which you may desire."

"Thank you," said the clergyman with more warmth than the occasion seemed exactly to demand, but there are times when a few kind words are of unspeakable value.

The gentleman, to whom his attention was directed appeared to the stranger more pretending than attractive. He was a tall portly man, with gold spectacles, and a gold-headed cane, and his self-complacent face was slightly rubicund, either from English descent, or a moderate indulgence in very excellent wine. In reply to the politely uttered question, "Can you tell me, sir, whether Dr. Welford is absent from home?"

He only said stiffly, "He has been away for two months, sir," without deigning to glance at the interrogator.

"Do you know how soon he may be expected to return?" asked the young man, without seeming at all annoyed by the haughtiness of his companion.

"Not for some time," replied Mr. Melville, in the same cool tone, adding, "Excuse me, sir, I am in haste. The sexton will give you any further information which you may desire."

"I beg your pardon," was the reply, in a peculiarly gentle, yet self-respectful voice. "I was told that you were the senior warden of this church, and concluded that you would be able to give me the most reliable intelligence with regard to its rector."

For the first time, Mr. Melville glanced towards his companion, and his manner in an instant changed; for he saw, at once, that he was a gentleman and a clergyman. "You must excuse me, sir," he said, "but we are so often pestered by inquisitive strangers, that I have got in the way of answering very abruptly. Dr. Welford went to Europe in March, and will not return till August. I presume he is an acquaintance of yours?"

"A very dear friend," was the reply, "and I cannot express my disappointment at finding him absent from the city."



"Will you tell me, sir, your name, that I may inform him on his return of your regret at not meeting him here?" asked Mr. Melville.

"Herbert Atherton," said the stranger, modestly.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Melville. "Then you are the gentleman whose fine sermons have recently been going the rounds of the church papers. I am happy to make your acquaintance."

The compliment was only acknowledged by a faint smile. As they were now at the gate, before which the chariot was standing, which Mr. Atherton had noticed on entering the church, Mr. Melville said hastily,

"I must bid you good morning, sir, for my wife and children are waiting for me to drive with them to a *matinée*, to which they are engaged. Here is my card, and I wish you would waive all ceremony and dine with me to-morrow."

"If my health will permit, I will do so with pleasure," rejoined Mr. Atherton; and then Mr. Melville took his seat in the most unexceptionable of carriages, and with a polite bow drove off.

The young clergyman followed the retreating

vehicle with a thoughtful eye, for a vision passed before his mind of our Saviour's entrance into Jerusalem, and the humility which marked his earthly condition. Luxury was peculiarly grateful to his own refined taste, but he had been led to think that Christian self-denial required the renunciation of much that was pleasing to the carnal man, and involuntarily murmuring, "the servant is not above his Lord," he slowly walked away in an opposite direction. Yet, ten minutes afterwards, Herbert Atherton entered a shop resplendent with magnificent articles of jewelry, and thronged with admiring customers. But it was not as a purchaser that he went thither; on the contrary, he wished to dispose of the only article of much value that he possessed in the world.

"Will you tell me, sir," he asked, addressing the oldest man behind Mr. Walker's counter, "what is the value of this watch," handing him at the same time a plain, but most excellent, repeater.

"It is a very fine watch," replied Mr. Walker, examining the works with evident satisfaction; "it is fully worth a hundred and fifty dollars."

"Could you loan me, then, that sum upon it?" asked Mr. Atherton in a low tone, but without any appearance of mortification.



"We do not keep a pawn-broker's shop," were the words which rose to Mr. Walker's lips, but a second glance at the stranger prevented their utterance. "You are a clergyman, sir, are you not?" he asked, in some surprise.

"I am," he replied; "and have been very ill among strangers," he added in a tone of deep sadness.

"Then take back your watch, sir: I will lend you the sum you wish without any such pledge: your profession is a sufficient guarantee for your honesty, and I shall be happy to oblige you."

Mr. Atherton did not extend his hand for the repeater, but said, "No, no, keep it, for I am still very unwell, and do not know what may happen to me."

"Well! remember it is subject to your order at any time," said Mr. Walker, kindly.—"Here, take this seat, while I make out a check for the sum you wish. There is no hurry about returning it: keep it as a gift if you cannot repay it as a loan."

"From my heart I thank you," was the warm reply, as Herbert took the proffered check, and giving Mr. Walker his card, in return, left the shop.

While this conversation was taking place, the

same lady who had offered a seat to the stranger was standing at a counter opposite, and examining some mourning brooches. A few words only had reached her ears ; but the moment the door of the shop closed, she stepped to Mr. Walker and desired to know the name of that pale, interesting man. He handed her the card, and the instant that she saw the name, she turned to her little son, and said with much emotion, " Frank, that was Mr. Atherton, who was so kind to your dear father ; run after him, and say that I wish to speak to him directly."

The lady had hardly recovered her self-command when Frank returned with Mr. Atherton, who looked inquiringly towards her, as if wondering what could be her will.

" Mr. Atherton," she said with great agitation, " my name is Waterford, and Mr. George Waterford, whom you knew in Havana, was my—"

She could say no more ; but Mr. Atherton easily divined the remainder of the sentence, and extended his hand towards her with an expression of deep sympathy.

" Let me drive you to your lodging," she continued, " for you look very feeble, and on our way thither, I can say what I wish. Frank, tell the coachman to draw up to the pavement."

Mr. Atherton was too sensible of his own increasing weakness to refuse this kind offer, and followed his new friend to an unpretending looking carriage which was in attendance, and where her two little girls were already seated.

"Where shall I set you down?" asked Mrs. Waterford, as the coachman stood waiting for orders.

"At the Marine Hotel, Water-street," he replied in a faint tone, for his strength was rapidly giving way.

"Marine Hotel! where is that?" asked Mrs. Waterford, with some surprise, and then added quickly, "Have you any friends there with you, or any lady who will take care of you on your return?"

"No, I am alone, all alone," he answered mournfully, for illness rendered him keenly alive to his own desolate condition.

"Home, James, drive directly home," said the lady, with sudden resolution. "You must consent to be my prisoner," she said, turning kindly to the poor invalid; "it would be an unchristian act to lose sight of any one to whom I am under such obligations, without being sure that they would be properly attended to: you must positively be very quiet for the present."

Mr. Atherton could only smile his thanks ; but he felt indescribably relieved at the idea that some one was taking charge of him, and carrying him to a private dwelling.

Not another word was said till the carriage stopped at the door of a large, but plain-looking house, in a retired part of the city.

“ Now, get out first, Frank,” said Mrs. Waterford, “ and hold the horses for James, so that he can come and help Mr. Atherton up the steps, for I see he is perfectly exhausted.”

Frank obeyed instantly, and James, who seemed to have imbibed the spirit of his mistress, tenderly assisted the young man into the house, and laid him gently on a couch in one corner of a large, comfortable-looking parlor. His energies were so completely prostrated by a long illness, that he felt nothing but an indefinite sense of relief at being so kindly cared for, and hardly moved till he heard a pleasant voice saying,

“ Here, Mr. Atherton, take this glass of wine, and try and swallow a biscuit : you need some refreshment.”

Thus incited, he took slowly the mild Port which Mrs. Waterford offered, and then falling back upon the couch, dropped into a sweet sleep, from which he did not awake for some hours.

As soon as Mrs. Waterford saw that her guest was peacefully slumbering, she threw a warm shawl over him, and going into the next room, which was occupied as a library, summoned the coachman thither, and sent him to the Marine Hotel, with orders to bring back every thing there that belonged to Mr. Atherton. He returned in half an hour, with a countenance of extreme mortification, and informed her that the hotel-keeper had called Mr. Atherton a swindler, and would not let him have any of his clothes till his bill was fully paid.

"Poor fellow," exclaimed Mrs. Waterford, with an expression of sincere pity, and then she seemed lost in deep thought. "Call Frank here," she said at length; and when her son appeared, she told him that he must go with James back to the Marine Hotel, and attend to some business for her there as well as he possibly could.

"You know you are my only reliance now, Frank," she said sadly; "and you must learn to be of use. Ask the hotel-keeper politely for Mr. Atherton's account; then take this blank check, and fill it up with the sum total of the bill rendered; next ask him to give you a receipt, and every thing belonging to Mr. Atherton, and hand



him the check in return. You must not get angry if he speaks disrespectfully of your father's friend, for he does not know what an excellent man he is."

Frank readily promised to do just what his mother wished, for he was very ambitious of being considered her protector, and fitted by nature to become such in reality. He returned in an hour accompanied by James, bringing back in triumph all Mr. Atherton's luggage, which was immediately placed in the convenient room which had been, in the mean time, prepared for his reception.

"Now, Frank," said his mother, "go gently to the parlor, and sit there quietly till Mr. Atherton awakes, and then, if he is strong enough to walk, show him to his room; but if not, call Peter to give him his arm."

"Or help him myself," said Frank, with quite an important air.

The young lad had been reading beside the sleeping invalid for nearly an hour, when he unclosed his eyes, and looking around, he dreamily asked,

"Who are you, my little boy, and where am I?"

"I am Frank Waterford, sir," he said eagerly, "and you are in my mother's house, where every

body loves you, because you were kind to dear papa when he was so ill."

"Ah! I remember now," said the stranger, with returning animation, and then closing his eyes, thanked the God of all goodness for providing him with so pleasant an asylum.

Frank did not like to disturb him, for his face had a very solemn expression, and his lips moved involuntarily, as he uttered his heartfelt thanksgiving.

"Now, sir," said Frank, as the visitor again unclosed his eyes, "will you go to your room?"

Mr. Atherton looked as if he were almost unwilling to move, for fear he should break the charm, but a moment after he rose with some effort, and followed Frank to the pleasant-looking apartment which he was requested to consider as his own.

The little boy closed the door behind him, when Mr. Atherton discovered that all his luggage had been transported thither, and saw upon the table the receipted bill for his expenses at the hotel. No mortification followed this discovery; for, though most independent in spirit, the young clergyman felt that there was nothing in his present condition for which he ought to blush, as it was the result of providential circumstances,



over which he had no control. What an exemplification was here of the truth of the promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days!"

Two years since, Mr. Waterford had arrived in Havana, sick and a stranger. Mr. Atherton was introduced to his acquaintance by their mutual friend, Dr. Welford, and had nursed him through a long and painful illness, with all the tenderness of a brother. His only fear now was that his kind hostess might inconvenience herself by her recent generosity; but he remembered that his late friend was thought to be a gentleman of wealth, and every thing about the establishment bespoke comfort and ease, though perfectly free from all attempt at display.

The grateful stranger could find no rest till he had poured out his feelings in prayer to Him to whom his joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, were always confided with child-like simplicity. When he had thus relieved his burdened heart, he descended to the parlor with a countenance beaming with gratitude and contentment. Mrs. Waterford advanced to meet him, looking much delighted at the change in his appearance.

"I should be overwhelmed by my obligations to you," he said warmly, as he took her offered

hand, "if I did not remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, how he said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' I am sure that what you have done for me this day has filled your heart with the purest satisfaction."

"Indeed it has," she replied with earnest sincerity. "Nothing has given me so much pleasure for many months. But how long have you been in the city, and why did you not make known your arrival to some of the clergy who are already well acquainted with you by reputation?"

"Because I was taken ill the very night of my arrival. I had been settled in Havana three years, when my health gave way, and the physicians prescribed a more bracing climate, as my only hope. They agreed that the latitude of this city would be more favorable, and I wrote to Dr. Welford to inquire whether he thought I could be useful in his vicinity. He informed me in reply, that there was no doubt of my obtaining immediate occupation, either in preaching, teaching, or editorship, and thus encouraged, I resolved to make the experiment. For economy's sake, I took passage in a merchant ship, which had a long and tedious passage; and for the same reason, I engaged a room at the Marine Hotel. I had been in the city only a few hours

when I felt the symptoms of a violent fever, and before midnight, was quite out of my senses. The captain of the vessel, who was lodging at the same house, showed me the most devoted attention, while he remained ; but he was obliged to sail in about three weeks, and could only commend me to the care of two old sailors, who nursed me most faithfully during the remainder of my illness. Yesterday, for the first time, I left my room to offer my thanksgiving for the mercy vouchsafed to me, and to try and discover Dr. Welford's residence. The rest of my business you must have learned, and I think you will allow me to transfer to you Mr. Walker's check, in return for the sum you have just expended in my behalf."

"I shall do no such thing," she replied warmly. "Are you going to cheat me of the pleasure which you acknowledged I manifested in performing that little act? Frank shall take the check back to Mr. Walker, and bring your watch, for it is an article which a gentleman misses every hour. No thanks! Remember I am only paying my just debts, and allow me to consider you as my oldest son for the present. Here comes Peter to summon us to dinner. You must need something more substantial, and

by and by you shall tell me all that I wish to know, with regard to your past history, and your connection with my lamented husband."

Mr. Atherton was incapable of replying. The tears which filled his eyes were not unbecoming a man, for they bespoke the gratitude of a noble heart.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SENIOR WARDEN AND HIS FAMILY.

“Look ye, brethren, choose ye out  
Holy men of good report,  
Filled with wisdom, zeal, and grace,  
These shall serve the outer court.”

THE night succeeding the events related in the last chapter, Herbert Atherton dreamed of his departed mother. He thought that she stole gently to his bed, and whispered in tones of silvery clearness, “Keep thyself unspotted from the world.” She had died when he was very young, and since that time, he had been quite unused to feminine care and tenderness; and that which he was now receiving touched his very heart. On going down stairs the following morning, the young clergyman found the family assembled for prayers. Mrs. Waterford congratulated him warmly on the beneficial effects of the night’s rest, and then requested him to conduct their usual devotions. He consented to do so with glad alacrity, for to pray with those he loved was one of his sweetest pleasures; and



he never felt that any friendship was complete till it had been thus cemented. There was a beautiful solemnity in his manner of conducting such exercises, from his entire forgetfulness of any presence, save that of his Maker, and even the children were unconsciously impressed with his deep sincerity. When he had finished, instead of feeling as if they were removed farther from him by his ministerial office, they were irresistibly drawn to his side. Little, curly-haired Fanny, the youngest child, was quite ready to sit on his knee, if Mrs. Waterford had not insisted that she should not presume so far on the kindness of a recent invalid, and Mary put her arms around his neck, as confidently as if it had been her mother's.

How pleasant and home-like that library with its caressing inmates seemed to the lonely stranger, and how different from the dreary room which he had occupied for so many weeks!

When the informal breakfast was over, Mrs. Waterford said with politeness, "Do not wait for me, but go into the library and entertain yourself, Mr. Atherton. I always superintend the putting away of these things, but I will be with you in half an hour."

"You will think it droll, perhaps," said Her-

bert, half laughing, "if I ask to stay and watch your operations; but I can't help wishing to do so. If you will only let me sit down in that comfortable chair and chat with you, while you are thus employed, it would be a real pleasure. I have lived so much in boarding-houses that I have seen little of domestic life, and though often visiting in private families, I do not think I ever saw any one perform this little feminine duty but my mother."

The last words were uttered in a sadder tone, and Mrs. Waterford immediately replied cordially, "Do so by all means: I like some one to chat with me while my hands are thus occupied. You may run up stairs, children. Don't get so fond of Mr. Atherton that you are never willing to leave him."

The children did, indeed, appear quite reluctant to tear themselves away from their new friend; but they were accustomed to implicit obedience, and left without a murmur.

"I half engaged to dine with the Mr. Melville whom you pointed out to me. Was it yesterday?—it seems to me much longer."

"It does, indeed," said the lady, "but our long talk, last evening, has made us feel like old friends. When the heart's inmost recesses have



been opened to another, it can never again be closed. There is a tie between us, which ought to make us forget that we were ever strangers."

"I will try and remember it no more," was Herbert's grateful reply. "I wish you had known my mother," he said, after a slight pause: "she was the purest of spirits. My father died when I was only a year old; and while she lived I was rarely out of her sight. I never knew her to do any act, merely because it was customary, of which her conscience did not approve; and she formed her own opinion on every subject, with no other guide but that Spirit which she daily implored to give her a 'right judgment in all things.'"

This observation gave Mrs. Waterford a clue to the uncommon directness and single-mindedness of the young clergyman, but she only observed, "The memory of such a mother is the most precious of legacies."

"It is my only inheritance," he replied warmly, "and I would not exchange it for all this world could give."

There was a pause in the conversation for a few moments, while Mrs. Waterford gave some orders to the servant, and placed the table silver

in a large wicker basket, which was its usual resting place.

"How happened it," she asked abruptly, as if the question had just entered her mind, "that Mr. Melville asked you to dine there to-day? He must have known something of you previously, or he would not have ventured upon such a step."

"He was aware that I was a friend of Dr. Welford's. Does he live far from here?"

"Quite a distance," she replied; "but I have to drive up town, and can set you down with the greatest ease. He will not dine till six o'clock."

"Was the gayly-dressed person that I saw with him yesterday his wife?" asked Herbert. "She did not look to me like a serious-minded woman."

Mrs. Waterford was tempted to smile at the simplicity of the question, which seemed to imply that no church officer would have any but a sober-minded wife; while in reality Mrs. Melville was at the head of fashion.

"She is not what you would call so, I presume," she replied. "He married an heiress, and ever since she has been so prospered in this world, that I fear she rarely thinks of the next."

"Poor woman!" exclaimed Herbert. "Of all the empty phantoms that mortals pursue, fashion seems to me the most unsatisfactory."

"Now I have done," said Mrs. Waterford, taking up her little basket of keys from the table, "and many thanks for your company. Perhaps you will farther assist me by hearing part of Frank's morning lesson."

"Gladly," he replied, appreciating the delicacy which wished to make him feel that he was of use, to free him from the sense of dependence.

It was nearly five o'clock when Mrs. Waterford's carriage stopped before a large double-house, with a Gothic front of fine granite.

"This is Mr. Melville's residence," she said, "and here, I suppose, we must part. Come home early, so that we may have another nice talk to-night," she added, as the coachman let down the steps.

"I am sure that I shall be almost impatient to return to your hospitable roof," he replied, as he alighted from the carriage.

A waiter, in elegant livery, answered the bell, and ushered the visitor into a spacious library, where his host was awaiting him.

Mr. Melville received his visitor as politely as

a person could do who was completely engrossed with himself.

After the customary greetings had been exchanged, he said, in a tone of condescension,

"I am so sorry that I could not have given you an opportunity of making the acquaintance of our Bishop to-day, but it was quite impossible. He had two confirmations and a funeral to attend, and could not be home till late in the evening. I am very sorry, for he is a nice fellow."

This last epithet did not seem to Mr. Atherton exactly proper to be applied to a "reverend father in God," especially one whose dignity of character would have seemed to have distanced all familiarity. He, however, only replied,

"I should like to make his acquaintance, for I hear that his praise is in all the churches."

"Certainly, certainly, of course," said Mr. Melville, going on with his own train of thought. "And there's Wykoff: I wanted you to meet him; but he had a baptism on hand, and could not come. He's a capital fellow. But Twining beat's them all. How you would like him! He is rather on stilts in the pulpit, but comes down wonderfully at a social dinner."

Mr. Atherton thought he should prefer to see him at his pulpit elevation. The mode in which

his brethren were mentioned was very repulsive to his taste, and he made an effort to change the conversation. The attempt, however, was quite unavailing. Bishops, priests, and deacons were to Mr. Melville the nobility of the land; and to show his familiarity with them was the whole end and aim of his conversation. He launched into a series of anecdotes, all tending to illustrate the confidential terms which existed between himself and certain prominent divines, interspersed with jokes, which, if perpetrated by clergymen, must have given them matter for subsequent repentance. He wound up with a grand glorification of the Church and her ministers in general, and of that which he attended, and Dr. Welford in particular. His hearer remembered that our heavenly Father may be sometimes more "honored by a religious silence than by religious speaking;" and this seemed to him one of these occasions. He made no reply to this pompous harangue, but asked some questions with regard to an entirely different subject.

The senior warden had been too much accustomed to blowing the ecclesiastical trumpet to pause long for want of breath. He answered his visitor's question very concisely, and then



launched into a dissertation on church architecture, in which he was very fluent, being well posted up in the cost of every edifice which had recently been built, and being fully persuaded that the one in which he worshipped was the greatest triumph that the art had ever achieved. He had the most singular faculty of viewing the externals of religion, without the slightest reference to its spirit, and appeared never once to have thought that the glory of God's temple was the shekinah within.

At the next pause in the conversation, Mr. Atherton took a volume from the table, and remarked on the richness of the binding and the number of the illustrations. He was surprised to find that so much taste had been lavished on a work of very inferior merit; but all Mr. Melville's favorite books were more distinguished for their execution than their contents. His library, however, was not all composed of similar works, but contained many rare and excellent theological treatises, to which his clerical friends were made welcome.

After some discourse, in which he showed great familiarity with the names of authors, publishers, and tables of contents, Mr. Melville assured Mr. Atherton that his whole collection



was quite at his service, and begged to send him any volume which he might select.

"I always keep a circulating library," he said, with evident satisfaction, "and buy books for the reading of my friends. But you look fatigued. Don't stand up any longer. Here is a catalogue which you can look over at your leisure. Would not you like to go up stairs and lie down? It still lacks half an hour of dinner-time, and you could take a refreshing little nap. Or, perhaps, you had rather lounge on this couch, which Bishop N—— calls my 'bed of down.'"

Mr. Atherton gladly accepted this offer, for he was much exhausted,—more, perhaps, by the conversation of his companion, than by previous fatigue. Mr. Melville saw that he was quite comfortable, and then excusing himself, left him to his meditations.

Herbert could not sleep, for his mind was always ruffled by intercourse with this species of men. He disliked to hear eminence in the Church spoken of, as if it conferred worldly dignity, remembering that our Saviour promised to his disciples no exaltation on earth but to drink of his cup, and be baptized with his baptism. The very air of the richly furnished apartment

seemed to him oppressive, and he would willingly have exchanged it for the dreary chamber where he had passed so many tedious weeks. Ministering angels had come thither to comfort him ; but it seemed as if they could not enter a place of which the god of this world had taken such full possession.

The young clergyman knew that he erred in allowing his spirit to become thus overclouded. He repeated the words of the Psalmist, "Thou shalt hide them privily by thy presence from the provoking of all men," and fervently prayed that such a portion of God's Spirit might be given him, as to keep him from irritation at human weakness and folly. His mind grew calm, and when Mr. Melville returned, no cloud remained upon his high, fair brow, or darkened his lofty soul.

"Mrs. Melville has been chiding me for keeping you to myself," said the host, courteously. "So I must take you forthwith to the drawing-room."

In passing through the wide hall, the guest was struck with the loftiness of its ceiling, the rich gilding of the immense chandeliers, and the beauty of the tessellated pavement ; but these were nothing to the sumptuousness of the draw-

ing-room. Its carpets, curtains, and seats were oriental in their luxuriousness; and though only the family were assembled there, all were dressed in the extreme of fashion, and with the utmost splendor. Mrs. Melville was reclining in a fauteuil, but arose at her husband's entrance, and extending the tips of her fingers to his visitor, expressed great delight at making his acquaintance.

"Bell, let me introduce you to Mr. Atherton," she said, presenting him at the same time to a young lady whom he had not at first observed. She was a perfect contrast to her mother—simple, dignified, and quiet: she advanced cordially towards him, and offering her hand, said earnestly, "I hope you are better to-day. Father told us yesterday that you seemed in very delicate health."

It is an astonishing relief, when surrounded by the uncongenial and artificial, to meet with ease and simplicity; and the manner of Miss Melville dispelled the constraint which was enthraling Mr. Atherton. He answered her gratefully, and involuntarily seated himself at her side, and entered into a very animated and agreeable conversation.

"Do you sing?" he asked, as two young ladies

left the piano, at which they had been performing a loud duet.

“Only for myself.”

“And why do you do that for your own gratification alone, which might give pleasure to others?” he asked.

“Because,” she replied, “I only sing simple, pathetic ballads, or sacred melodies, and they are not suited for a miscellaneous audience.”

“You are right,” he remarked, “but this only makes me anxious to hear you. The best musicians are usually the most averse to singing in the presence of unsympathizing auditors. Are you fond of church music?”

“Very much so. At the school from which I have just returned, a few of the girls sing in the choir of the little church, and I always enjoy our practising evenings.”

At this moment dinner was announced, and being the only gentleman who was a guest, Mr. Atherton offered his arm to the lady of the house, and on reaching the dining-room, was placed at her right hand. He was doubtful whether he was expected to pronounce a benediction, for it did not appear to him as if this family remembered God in all their ways; but Mr. Melville called upon him, immediately, to perform this

solemn act. The young clergyman's manner became deeply reverential as he uttered these few words, which were the unstudied expression of his own heart: "Give us grace to be temperate in our appetites, and moderate in the supply of them, that we may always be in a fit frame for thy service, and able to provide liberally for the wants of others. This we ask for our dear Saviour's sake."

Christian moderation! Alas for the groaning board, the multiplied courses, the costly viands! Truly! to what purpose is this waste?

The blessing was hardly pronounced when a young man, whose features were almost lost in the hair with which his face was covered, called out to his sister from the opposite side of the table, "Bell, I say, are you going to the opera to-night?"

"No, brother," she replied, quietly, without assigning any reason.

"Why not?" he asked. "I did not say the theatre, child. All the most sanctified people in town go to the opera. What harm is there in it?"

"I cannot tell, as I have never been there; but what good would it do me?"

"Good, why a world of good! You would



hear Spressi, and she sings like an angel. It is a great deal better to go there to hear her, than to Calvert-street church, as a great many do; and I am sure our organist never plays any voluntaries, but opera airs Christianized."

Miss Bell could not deny this fact, and seemed anxious to waive the discussion; but Harry was bent on prolonging it.

"You are setting up to be wiser than your elders, Bell, and that is much worse than going to hear first-rate music. Father always goes to the opera, and he is a churchwarden."

"But not a communicant, Harry," she replied in a low tone, which, however, reached Mr. Atherton's ear.

"Not a communicant," he said to himself: "this explains it all." And his respect for Mr. Melville rose at finding that he did not profess any higher principles than those of the world around him.

"Suppose I ask Mr. Atherton what he thinks of it," continued Harry in a low, bantering tone. "I would, but I have a kind of fancy that he would come out on your side. I think I'll venture it at all risks. Mr. Atherton," he said in a much louder voice, "don't you think the opera a rational Christian amusement?"



“I know nothing of the way in which it is managed in this country,” he replied, with calm dignity, “so I cannot give an unqualified opinion. I believe the same rule, however, applies to amusements everywhere. Those are most suitable for a Christian, which involve the least expenditure of time, thought, or money, and upon which he can most conscientiously implore the blessing of God.”

“You are right, sir!” replied the young man frankly; for though gay himself, he had come sufficiently often in contact with truth to distinguish it readily from error. “Your rule includes the opera, for our box at it would support a poor family for a year: a visit to it costs six precious hours, and the girls think all the day before what dress they shall wear to it, and all the day after of the people whom they met there. I am heartily glad you do not approve of it.”

“Harry is jesting,” said Mrs. Melville, who could not believe that her son would acknowledge that the very amusement which he had been advocating, was an unsuitable one for Christian people. She did not know that in his inmost heart, her dissipated son respected nothing so much as total abstinence from the gayeties in which he participated so freely.

This little glimpse of Harry Melville's character made Mr. Atherton peculiarly alive to the tone of the subsequent conversation. He saw that, notwithstanding his seeming manner, and the lightness with which he spoke, he was capable of thinking deeply, and even justly upon many subjects about which he affected not to think at all. To draw out the young man's mind more fully, he gave a literary turn to the conversation, and conversed with much ease and grace upon various topics; assisted by Miss Melville, whose remarks displayed a rich and cultivated understanding. Harry's manner lost its affectation, and became exceedingly agreeable. He had travelled abroad and visited many interesting places, which he described with picturesque accuracy and refined taste. The young clergyman's heart fairly yearned to impart to his companion that talismanic gift which could bring all his fine faculties into harmony, and determined to cultivate his acquaintance by every means in his power. He was surprised to find how quickly the time passed, notwithstanding the whispered remarks of his hostess, to which he was occasionally obliged to listen; and when at last the party arose from the table, and adjourned to the drawing-room, he was gratified

that young Melville seemed anxious for further conversation. His father, however, did not permit this indulgence, feeling that his guest had missed much in being debarred so long from his own society, by the etiquette which had placed him at the other end of the table.

After listening for half an hour patiently to a repetition of the harangues delivered in the library, Mr. Atherton took his leave with a cordial invitation from the whole family to renew his visit.

## CHAPTER III.

## PROFESSIONAL DUTIES AND PRIVATE FEELINGS.

"I hear thy voice—thou bidd'st me quit  
Thy Paradise: I bless, and do submit."

DURING the next few weeks, Herbert Atherton gained rapidly in strength, for the heavy burden was removed from his mind, which had hitherto retarded his recovery. Upon their first acquaintance, Mrs. Waterford had perceived, with true feminine instinct, that uncertainty with regard to the future and a disagreeable sense of dependence were wearing upon the spirits of her young friend, notwithstanding his vigorous efforts to control them. As soon as he was really well enough to pursue any occupation, she determined to propose to him that he should undertake the entire charge of Frank's education. The offer was made to him in manner and form, for she thought that even between the closest friends, business should be thus conducted; and the salary fixed upon, though liberal, was not large enough to make him feel that any part of it was

a gift. Mr. Atherton gladly accepted the proposal, and his mornings henceforth were always passed in the library with his bright and affectionate pupil.

Frank had hitherto been entirely educated by his mother. Her means were so ample, that she was relieved from all the drudgery of housekeeping, and a most valuable nurse took care of the little girls while she was engaged with their brother. He had not learned to read till nearly six years old ; but was at that time uncommonly mature in mind from constant association with older people. When once fairly started in the career of learning, his progress was rapid and thorough : now only ten, he was well advanced in Latin, and quite a proficient in English studies. Mr. Atherton had been much pleased with the lad ever since the day on which they had first met, and entered into his new employment with real enthusiasm. He considered the vocation of teacher as only second to his own sacred office, and had always been desirous of uniting them. The pleasure which he felt in the hours that were passed with his pupil was readily imbibed by the latter, and he began to consider his lessons more as a matter of choice than necessity.

The prepossession that Frank had conceived for his new teacher, on account of his connection with a father whom he had dearly loved, soon ripened into the warmest attachment. The bright manly boy became the almost inseparable companion of the walks of the young clergyman, by whom he was treated precisely as a brother. It was not long before he acquired the habit of telling him every thing in which he was interested; and this gave an opportunity for directing even his thoughts.

The most precious talent in any teacher is this power of gaining the confidence of the young, for it gives them an amount of influence which could be acquired by no other method, and takes from their relation all mercenary character. Mrs. Waterford saw with deep satisfaction this growing intimacy, and was most grateful to the Giver of all mercies that he had provided her fatherless son with so excellent an example and so judicious a guide.

But though Mr. Atherton devoted his mornings exclusively to Frank, this was not long his only occupation: he was introduced by Mr. Melville to several of the most prominent clergymen of the city, and became warmly interested in many of the benevolent plans which they were prosecu-



ting with such ardent zeal. He was delighted to find that the manner in which they had been mentioned by Mr. Melville had not proceeded from any want of dignity or consistency in themselves, but from the absurd habit which that gentleman had conceived, in common with many others, of endeavoring to enhance his own importance by an appearance of great familiarity with those who were held in high esteem.

As soon as Mr. Atherton's health was restored, at the urgent request of the excellent bishop, he took charge of a small missionary chapel, which had recently been established in one of the most depraved parts of the city. This chapel was principally attended by men and boys, who were more pleased with extemporaneous speaking than written discourses, as great vivacity of manner was necessary to engage their attention.

Mr. Atherton's sermons had always been remarkable for the originality and variety of their illustrations, and this peculiarity adapted them to the comprehension of a class of hearers who needed that all abstract truths should be explained by sensible objects: without making a single remark which could excite mirthfulness, or degrade the loftiest of all subjects, he managed to introduce a variety of interesting anecdotes,

precisely adapted to their own mode of thought and manner of life. This method of preaching required no previous study, excepting with regard to the nature and capacities of his audience; and this he gained by almost daily visits to their wretched haunts, which even more excellent men would have feared to enter. It is true that occasionally he met with insolence, often with scorn, and sometimes with violent threats, while on these errands of love, but they seemed scarcely to excite even emotion.

He had taken a calm survey of all the difficulties of his present position before assuming it, and they therefore caused neither surprise nor apprehension. Having thus deeply impressed upon his mind by actual observation the wretchedness which sin entails, and the fearful destruction to which it must eventually lead, it was not singular that the ardent young man soon became distinguished for his eloquence. Now and then, a stranger of respectable appearance might be seen among his motley congregation, attracted thither by the report of the eminent success of the preacher; and these were always struck with the deep interest visible on faces seared by crime, and bloated by vice.

Although Mrs. Waterford fully approved of

the new charge which had been undertaken by her young friend, she always felt some anxiety when he did not return at the usual hour. They were now upon the most confidential and intimate terms; but there was one point in Mr. Atherton's character which Mrs. Waterford did not fully understand: this was the entire indifference that he manifested towards all other ladies, although enjoying so keenly her own friendship and society. It is true, that after paying a visit to Mr. Melville, he would sometimes speak approvingly of the sober-mindedness and intelligence of his eldest daughter; but not a particle of personal interest seemed to mingle in these commendations. His manner, too, was always that of one who had bid adieu to every hope of earthly happiness, though, excepting his orphanage, there was no feature in his lot to account for this peculiar hopelessness. He was bright and cheerful, but his contentment evidently had its only seat in the conscientious performance of duty; and when in female society, his manners, though kind and cordial, were those of a person who felt himself divided by an impassable gulf from all the nearest and dearest ties of life.

From these circumstances, Mrs. Waterford had arrived at the conclusion that her friend had met

with one of those disappointments of the heart, which, if rightly used, do so much towards chastening and elevating the character. She would not, for the world, have pried into his confidence, but with true feminine curiosity, she could not help saying to him one evening, on his return from a social visit,

“Well, my dear Herbert, have you met with any ladies this evening that you found at all interesting?”

She thought that her manner of putting this question was quite careless, but he had learned to read the language of her expressive countenance, and saw that his indifference to her own sex had excited her astonishment. For a moment his brow was shadowed by pain, and then he walked towards the window to conceal his emotion.

“Forgive me,” she said instantly, “if I have annoyed you by my remark: it was one I had no right to make.”

“You have every right,” he replied warmly, “to my confidence; but there is one subject to which it is always painful for me to allude.”

“Then never mention it,” she replied quickly: “much as I value your confidence, I value your happiness more.”

"Thank you," he said affectionately, as, somewhat more composed, he seated himself by her side.

It was a warm evening in the middle of July, and the only light was screened by a shade of colored glass; yet Mrs. Waterford saw that her companion's cheek was flushed, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Perhaps I shall be relieved," he said, after a silence of some moments, "if I tell you the history of my heart, though it may be of little interest :

"More than two years since, I was sent for, as a clergyman, to visit an elderly lady who was very ill. She had arrived at Havana nearly a month previous, accompanied by her brother and his only daughter, a young lady of about eighteen. I had noticed the whole party on coming out of the church, the Sunday after their arrival; for, though very delicate, Miss Cameron had not been considered in immediate danger, and was not confined to the house where they had taken lodgings for the winter. I was struck, however, by that peculiar transparency of the skin, and sunken appearance around the mouth, which so often marks those who are victims of consumption, and was not therefore surprised to learn,



soon afterwards, that she was suffering from a violent attack of hemorrhage. Her brother, Mr. Cameron, being persuaded that a residence in a warmer climate was all that was necessary to restore her health, felt no uneasiness at leaving her for a few weeks, when recalled by business to Savannah, which was the residence of the family. A gentleman belonging to Havana, with whom he had been intimate for many years, promised to see that she received every attention; and his daughter Agnes would, he well knew, be the most tender and devoted of nurses.

“On entering the chamber of the invalid, I saw at a glance that her days were numbered. She was a remarkably interesting woman, and had, notwithstanding her weakness, perfect command of all her faculties. Her niece was bending over her with an expression of intense anxiety; but her own face was free from all perturbation, and a smile passed over it, as I approached the couch on which she reclined, and made some inquiries with regard to her soul's health. She had been, she told me, a communicant in the Church ever since her fifteenth year, and had enjoyed a life of uncommon peace and freedom from temptation. She had not sent for me to quiet any fears of conscience, or to reconcile her to



leaving a world with which she had little sympathy; but to use that beautiful service for the sick, which, even in health, she had often read with the deepest interest. I found that her life had been one long preparation for death, and that my only office was to offer a prayer and a thanksgiving, and commend her to His keeping in whom she had long since learned to trust.

“While Miss Cameron was speaking thus calmly of her own probable decease, her niece was fearfully agitated.

“‘Try and compose yourself, Agnes,’ she said tenderly; ‘if you love me, do not grieve that I have a prospect of entering so soon upon a world of perfect happiness.’

“‘But I cannot live without you—indeed I cannot!’ she exclaimed, clinging to her aunt with convulsive strength, and seeming entirely forgetful of my presence; ‘who will ever tell me what is right, or love me as you have done?’

“‘You have one friend who has always loved you much more dearly,’ said the invalid faintly, disengaging herself from the clasping arms of her beloved niece. ‘When He called your mother away, I was sent to fill her place; and when I am gone, He will provide some other guide for

you, my poor child. I have no fear in leaving you to His care.'

" 'Oh, Aunt! how can you be so willing to give me up?' exclaimed Agnes, almost frantic with grief; 'you who have watched me so many years, and would not even leave me for a day!'

" This reproach agitated for a moment the weakened frame of the sufferer, but she soon regained her self-composure, and turning to me, remarked,

" 'My poor Agnes does not know what she says. God will in time strengthen her.'

" I could not witness this scene without deep emotion. I had not seen a more lovely being than the young girl who was thus deeply afflicted; and her manner and bearing betrayed the depth of her feelings and the warmth of her heart. I wished that I were her brother, so that I might be permitted to wipe the tears from those dark eyes, and promise to watch over her with unsleeping tenderness. As it was, I only spoke to her, soothingly, of Him who is closer than a brother, and more tender than a mother. She scarcely heeded my words, but kept her eyes fixed on her aunt, with a deep mournfulness of expression which I can never forget. I heard her sobbing violently when I prayed that if it were not God's

good pleasure that the sick person should recover, she might, 'after this painful life was ended, dwell with him in life everlasting.'

"Before leaving Miss Cameron, I begged her to let me know if in any way I could be of service to herself or her niece, and promised to see them again during the next day.

"Why should I dwell on the hours passed in that blessed chamber? For some time I had little conversation with Agnes, for she was always absorbed in her aunt, who daily grew weaker, but lingered much longer than I had at first expected.

"It was the evening of a lovely sabbath, early in April, when Miss Cameron sent to know if I could administer to her the Holy Sacrament. I immediately repaired to her chamber, where I found no one but Agnes and herself, besides the colored woman who was their constant attendant. To my astonishment, as I was about commencing the communion service, Agnes rose to leave the room.

"'Stay, dearest,' said her aunt feebly; 'I could have wished that you might have joined in all the services; but there are some prayers in which you can surely unite.'

"Agnes reseated herself, evidently agitated in

no common degree, at being thus requested to remain during the most solemn mystery of our holy faith.

“She did not again attract my notice, till after the administration of the sacred elements, in which Miss Cameron and her faithful servant alone participated. Then her face was covered with both hands, and she was sobbing violently. When the services were concluded, she left the room immediately, and her aunt gazed after her with mournful tenderness; and then said, ‘Poor child! How the Spirit is struggling with her heart! Oh, gracious Saviour, bring this lamb into thine own fold!’

“The whole manner of this eminent Christian surpasses description. She seemed to realize the presence of her beloved Redeemer, as completely as if he were corporeally visible, and she had found in the commemoration of his death a rich foretaste of that heavenly feast to which she was soon to sit down, in the kingdom of his Father.

“It is impossible to convey to you my astonishment at thus learning that one so lovely and amiable as Agnes Cameron was still an alien from the fold of Christ. It had never once crossed my mind that she did not fully coincide in all

the devout sentiments which her aunt expressed, and insensibly, I had formed for her the deepest attachment, partly founded on respect for the Christian virtues which I had imagined she possessed.

“I saw at a glance, the painful task which was before me, for I had long since made up my mind that no Christian, and especially no clergyman, had any right to unite himself with one who could not fully sympathize with him on this most important of all subjects. In a letter of advice bequeathed to me by my dying mother, she had especially warned me against the danger of fixing my affections on any woman who was not a devoted Christian; knowing, as she said, that with my ardent temperament, much of my happiness in this life, and perhaps my salvation in the next, might depend upon this momentous choice. She begged, however, that I would not make her wishes the only ground for pursuing this course, but would calmly examine the Bible, while my mind was unprejudiced, and write down the irresistible result of this prayerful scrutiny.

“I fulfilled her request, and will show you, at some future time, the reasons why I determined that no beauty of person, or loveliness of charac-



ter, should induce me to overlook in a woman the absence of religious principle?

"You may, perhaps, think that I had arrived too hastily at the conclusion that Agnes was not a Christian, because she was not a communicant, and that I had every reason to expect that the affliction through which she was passing, might render her entirely suitable for the wife of a clergyman.

"But a conversation which I held with Miss Cameron on the day following this impressive scene, showed me that my conclusions, though hasty, had been correct. She informed me that her brother, Mr. Cameron, had married an amiable but irreligious woman, who had exercised a most unfortunate effect upon his principles and habits. As a boy, he had been remarkably free from worldliness; but a kind desire to please his wife, led him into society, for which he had naturally no inclination, and in time, he acquired a taste for gayety and a love of excitement. His religious declension was rapid, and in a few years, though a professing Christian, he was only so in name. Agnes was the only child of this unfortunate union, and being a girl, was wholly under her mother's influence, and brought up without the slightest regard to any interests, but those of



time. She was only ten years of age when her mother was seized with a violent fever, which soon terminated her life.

“Mr. Cameron was completely prostrated by this shock, for he had ceased to lean upon the only Arm which was capable of affording him support. He went immediately to Europe, leaving Agnes at a fashionable boarding-school, where her associates were of the most thoughtless kind. Miss Cameron, herself, had been living for many years in the family of another brother, who was also a widower; but as his oldest daughter was now able to take charge of his household, she immediately requested the father to intrust to her the education of his child, whenever his health should allow him to return to his native land. He gladly acceded to this proposal, and came back in a few months. But Miss Cameron could hardly recognize her brother in the cold, reserved man, over whose house she now presided, as his affliction had not melted his heart, but turned it to stone. He seemed hardly to feel any interest in his child, who became wholly dependent upon her aunt for care and protection. She manifested the germs of much that was excellent; but her early education had developed only the seeds of evil. By patient

kindness her faithful aunt endeavored to eradicate her erroneous ideas, but she found her task a difficult one. Agnes was warm-hearted, generous, impulsive, and amiable, but had no sense of religious responsibility. She made rapid improvement in self-government and in intellect, but her heart seemed almost impervious to religious impressions. Lovely in manner, and capable of exciting the warmest affection, she was totally deficient in this crowning grace of female character.

“This relation was made to me with many tears, and much as it excited my pity for the motherless girl, still the story of her father’s errors strengthened my own determination. I had yet never displayed any thing but friendly interest in Agnes, and therefore was bound by no sentiment of honor to disclose my attachment. If, indeed, her present affliction should be blessed to her soul, I might then conscientiously ask her hand, but otherwise I had no right to yield to my own heart.

“Before that week had closed, Miss Cameron had quietly passed to the world of spirits. I was sitting at the side of her bed, and Agnes by her pillow, when she breathed her last. It was vain to speak of consolation to the agonized

mourner. She wept day and night, till so exhausted that she was incapable of feeling. Her father in the mean while arrived, his return having been accelerated by the news of the increased illness of his sister. He thanked me coldly for my services, but intimated that he could now dispense with my visits, and I therefore saw Agnes no more till the evening of her departure. Then I put in her hand a letter which I had written, placing before her in as strong a light as I could the risk she was incurring by endeavoring to quiet the voice of conscience, and repel the spirit of God. As her father and the gentleman who had taken charge of his sister during his absence were both present, we had little opportunity for any conversation by which I could learn what was the state of her mind. She seemed deeply grateful for my attention to her aunt, and shed many tears when I bade her farewell. I have never seen her since, but have heard that after her return to Savannah she plunged very soon into gay society, and appeared perfectly wedded to the world. Still I have never ceased to pray that she might become an obedient child of God; not that we may be united here, but that she may be saved from the inevitable doom of the impenitent."

At this thought, Mr. Atherton was completely overcome; and Mrs. Waterford, who had been deeply interested in his narration, gave him the most soothing and delicate sympathy, and tried to encourage him to believe that his prayers would be heard.

From that time, no reference was ever made to this sad subject, but Herbert seemed more closely united to his new friend, by her knowledge of his deepest trial. Frank never suspected, when listening to the animated conversation of his teacher and friend, that he only maintained his constant cheerfulness by never-failing effort and unceasing prayer.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH.

“The hand that holds her chalice should be pure,  
The priest of her high temple spotless as  
The vestments of her ministry.”

EARLY in the month of August, Dr. Welford returned from England. He was informed by Mr. Melville, soon after his arrival, that Mr. Atherton was in the city, and went immediately to Mrs. Waterford's, where he found his friend giving Frank a lesson in mathematics.

Herbert expressed great pleasure at seeing, once more, a familiar face; for, though he had made many acquaintances who had been exceedingly kind, still his spirit yearned for some tie connecting him with his own past life, and his early home. He told Dr. Welford frankly of the embarrassing situation in which he had been placed, when he recovered from his sudden illness, and found himself destitute in a land of strangers. His friend was exceedingly troubled to learn how much inconvenience had been oc-

casioned by an act of thoughtlessness on his own part, and seemed hardly able at first to forgive himself.

“The fact was,” he said, “that, shortly after writing to you, I learned that business of importance would make it necessary for me to go abroad without delay. The arrangement of my affairs, previous to my departure, in addition to my professional duties, occupied my mind so fully, that it was not till on my passage to England that I remembered the possibility of your leaving Havana before I could communicate to you the intelligence of my absence, or commend you by letter to any of my friends. It was also impossible for me to learn your direction in New York, and I contented myself with writing to the Island, with the hope that you might be detained there till you could hear from me. I assure you that the uncertainty as to your movements has given me much uneasiness; and I was greatly relieved to-day at finding that you were with Mrs. Waterford. I presumed that you knew her direction, and came hither, soon after landing, with the intention of telling her such particulars of her husband’s illness as she could learn only from yourself, and I was sure she would show you every attention in her power.”



"She has indeed done so," said Herbert, gratefully, and he related to Dr. Welford the providential circumstances which had led to their acquaintance.

"But how is it, Herbert," exclaimed Dr. Welford, "that you have taken charge of the little chapel of St. Barnabas? it is no place for you."

"Why not?" asked his young friend, with great simplicity. "Do you not think I am capable of doing any good to the poor outcasts, by whom it is attended?"

Dr. Welford smiled. "Yes, indeed; I do not doubt that you have been very useful; but it is not such a position as you ought to occupy."

"I cannot see any objection to my doing so, while the compensation I receive for Frank's tuition enables me to be independent; and I have time for both," said Herbert, with a questioning look.

"But your talents, my dear friend, are of too high an order to be wasted in a place, where any good, kind man would be quite as useful. I must speak to the Bishop about it, and there will be no difficulty in procuring a congregation, more capable of appreciating you."

Herbert had great respect for Dr. Welford, but

he was always perfectly independent both in opinion and action.

"I thank you most sincerely for your kind offer," he said; "but, for the present I would rather remain where I am. I should hardly be able to write two sermons weekly, and do my duty to Frank faithfully; besides, supposing it true that God has given me any talents for preaching, I shall only be so much the more likely to touch the hard hearts of my auditors, whose situation has inspired me with the deepest interest. It always has seemed to me the most Christ-like of occupations, to try and bring back to virtue and happiness, those children of misery and crime; and the little influence I may have obtained, may yet end in leading some wretched being to the knowledge of the Saviour."

"And are you willing to toil on in such an unpromising field, for the faint hope that some solitary individual may yet be saved through your instrumentality?" asked Dr. Welford, admiring the cheerfulness with which his companion mentioned this remote hope as sufficient reward for his arduous labors.

"If a single soul is worth the world, the chance of saving one ought to be incentive

enough for a life of exertion—had it not?” asked Herbert.

“Certainly, it should,” said his friend warmly. “I think sometimes that we clergymen, who are shut up year after year in the city, breathing the tainted atmosphere of the world, are in danger of losing our spirituality, and viewing our fellow-beings as they are esteemed by the mass of mankind around us, rather than with the impartiality of our divine Exemplar. I own, that for the moment, a congregation like my own seemed to me worthy of a more talented minister than that of St. Barnabas; but when I think of it, the latter position has, perhaps, the greatest need of eloquence and fervent piety. In my parish, there are many Christians, and the majority lead, at least, moral lives, while yours is composed mainly of the vicious, who might not hear in any other way the offers of salvation. Still, though souls are all of equal value in the sight of their Creator, it cannot be denied that there are those whose influence is much more extensive than others, and of course their conversion will lead to much more important results. Religion and morality spread downwards rather than upwards in society; and therefore, it is peculiarly desirable that those who are

in high positions should be examples to the rest."

"I agree with you on this point," said Herbert; "and I own that it has grieved me to find how many professedly Christian people were doing injury, instead of good, to those for whom they are, in a manner, responsible. Do you not sometimes become quite discouraged, when you see persons so familiar with the form of godliness, who have none of its spirit?"

"Indeed, I do," exclaimed Dr. Welford, with deep feeling. "Men speak flippantly of the holiest topics, which they have no preparation of the heart for understanding, and there is not a mystery which is sacred from their profane touch. Even the blessed sacrament is bandied about from mouth to mouth; and the mode of its administration, and the manner in which all the services are performed, is a matter of perpetual criticism."

"Is it possible!" said Herbert, mournfully. "I should as soon think the manner in which the prodigal son approached his father, was a subject of remark, as that in which God's children draw nigh to his throne."

"So it would seem," said Dr. Welford; "but I am forgetting myself, and staying here quite too

long ; before I go, however, you must promise to preach for me next Sunday, I have my hands full of business, and you will really oblige me, if you will exchange duties on that occasion."

"Certainly, then, I will do so," said Herbert ; "but I have little time before me now, to write a sermon."

"Have you none with you?" asked Dr. Welford in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, several," replied the young clergyman, hesitatingly ; "but do you not think, sir, that we always ought to improve from year to year in our discourses ? Progress is, you know, the law of Christian life, and if we are really the children of God, we must be advancing in holiness, and attaining clearer views of eternal truth. If so, it seems to me that after the discipline of long sickness, and much trial, I ought to write better sermons than before I was thus chastened."

There was something delightful to Dr. Welford in the simple, earnest spirit of the young clergyman, and he sighed, as he thought how, amid the battle of life, the tone of his own mind had become, imperceptibly, less elevated.

"I hope you will do my people as much good, as you have done me," he said warmly, at parting.



As Herbert Atherton and Frank were walking, that day, in a retired part of the city, they observed that they were followed by a man of most suspicious appearance, whose head and neck were, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, so closely muffled by a silk handkerchief, that it was almost impossible to catch a glimpse of his face. As, in crossing a street, Mr. Atherton fell a little behind his pupil, the stranger stepped up to him and asked in a low voice, "Are you the minister who preaches at St. Barnabas?"

"Yes," said Herbert, fearlessly; "do you want me?"

"Meet me in front of the chapel, as soon as you can, and I will tell you what I wish to say; it won't do for me to be staying here," said the stranger, and then fell back again.

Mr. Atherton stepped forward quickly and joined his pupil.

"Frank," he said, "I have an errand in the other part of the city, so I will leave you here. Tell your mother that I may not be at home in time for dinner, so she need not wait for me."

So saying, Mr. Atherton turned into another street, and proceeded forthwith to the spot which had been named by the stranger as a rendezvous.



Though he had walked very rapidly thither, the latter had anticipated him, and was awaiting his arrival. He seemed to have lost all fear of detection, now that he was in the haunts of vice, and said, in a loud tone,

"So you're come, sir; that's well done of ye! There's a woman named Sally Brown who's in a desperate taking, because she thinks her husband's going to die. He got badly hurt in a bout last night, and I promised her I'd dog you round, and ask you to come and see him. He has just been in the brown jug, and is desperate fierce; but there's a gang of us as will hang round the door, and be up with him, if he tries to hurt you."

"Thank you," said Herbert, with a quiet smile. "I do not think I shall need your assistance. Why should he hurt me, when I only wish to do him good?"

"Because we fellers here have got a hatred of everybody that's riding over our heads. I wouldn't have stirred a step, if Sall hadn't nursed me through the fever, so I owed her a good turn; and having got you here, I'm bound in honor to see you safe home."

"So even these poor creatures have what they call their principles," thought the clergyman, as

he bent to enter the low cellar to which his steps were directed, and passing through a narrow entry, floored only with mud, entered as wretched a looking spot as imagination could well conceive. On the dirty straw in one corner of the room a fierce-looking man was lying, dressed in a shirt and ragged trousers. Both of the garments were covered with blood, as was also the filthy handkerchief which was bound round his bushy head.

The moment the stranger entered he attempted to rise, but fell back with a low sound, resembling more the growl of an animal than the voice of a human being. A woman sat near him, on a low stool, trying, through blinding tears, to tie the shreds of what appeared to be a child's apron together, so as to make a longer bandage for her husband's wound. She was pale and emaciated, and cast an uneasy eye towards the other corner of the room, where a little child was asleep on an old cloak, which was spread on the bare ground. With a natural instinct of delicacy, she drew a ragged shawl, which, with the exception of a petticoat, was her only covering, more closely over her breast, and put her finger to her lips, as if she did not wish the visitor to say he came at her invitation. He took the hint, and, without

addressing a word to her, walked up to the couch of the man, stumbling over an empty barrel and a broken chair in his way thither, and said kindly,

“Are you much hurt, my friend?”

“To be sure I am, or I’d have had you chucked out of this room before you had had time for palaver. I suppose you want a chance to send me back to that old hole where I’ve been buried alive these two years; but I’d take off this thing, and bleed to death before you’d have me,” he said jeeringly, pulling at the bandage on his head with a threatening air.

“Oh don’t,” screamed his wife, as, flying to him, she caught hold of his hand. He flung her off with one arm, as if she had been a baby, muttering, “Poor fool! it would be the best day you ever saw.”

The woman rose from the ground on which she had fallen apparently unhurt, and, turning to Mr. Atherton, said mournfully, “He didn’t use to be this way; it’s injustice that’s crazed him. He was put in State Prison, when he hadn’t done any thing wrong, only taking the drink.”

“And do you call that wrong?” he asked, while his eyes flashed from under his shaggy brows. “Wasn’t it to get you and your famish-

ing brat out of my head that I took to the drink? And then, because I held another man's coat, must I be shut up, as if I were a wild beast?"

"Tell me what has happened to you," said Mr. Atherton mildly, who saw that he could do the man no good till he became calmer.

There was real interest in the voice, without a tone of superiority or reproach. The sick man looked at him for a moment with fierce scrutiny, and then said more gently,

"I believe, on my soul, you don't mean me any harm, so I'll just tell you about it. Sally here and that brat in the corner were starving one bitter winter's night, and mad with misery. I rushed into the street. I met two fellows, as wretched as myself, and they spent their last sixpence for a drink for us all, to keep us warm, and make us forget what a dog's life we led. I don't remember much what happened, only they went into a big house, and told me to stand on the steps, and call out if anybody came. I heard the watchmen a few minutes after, and then I yelled to them that somebody was coming. Next I knew I had a blow on my head, and was tucked up in a jail. The men I was with made off; but it was proved they broke into a dwelling-house, and I was their accomplice, so I was sentenced

to State Prison, and dragged off without a chance to see Sally. If I wasn't bad when I went there, I am now; and I only wish I had a chance of doing something ugly, to pay them for punishing me for nothing."

"It was very hard," said Mr. Atherton compassionately, for he knew the maddening effect of supposed injustice upon some natures, and felt a deep sympathy for the temptations to which the poor were subjected. "But you know, my friend, there is One who watches over us all, and you must leave justice in his hands."

"In his hands!" exclaimed the man, with a scornfulness which chilled Mr. Atherton's blood. "He just! look at my wife and child, who are as sinless as babies, and then at some of those women rolling in luxury, who are as worthless as dirt, and then tell me about justice."

"There is a world to come," replied Mr. Atherton, with deep solemnity, "where you will have to own that God is just."

"I know it," said the man, shuddering, "I feel it; but can it be worse than this?"

"You know how wretched you are here; think of such wretchedness growing greater and greater, and lasting forever."

The man gave a howl of agony at this idea.



"Pray for me," he said, "for I could not endure another drop of misery."

Mr. Atherton fell on his knees, and poured forth a prayer of such deep fervency that the eyes of the poor wretch were immovably fixed on his uplifted face, and he involuntarily repeated some of his heartfelt petitions.

When the clergyman arose from his knees, however, the only words which he said were, "Go now ! but don't come here again till I send for you."

"May God give you a new heart, my poor friend," said the clergyman, tenderly ; and then without speaking another word he left the wretched apartment.

The next day, at a later hour, while walking through a narrow lane, Mr. Atherton was met by the same strange looking man, who said hastily, "Sally sent you word that there is no use in your coming again. The landlord says they must all budge ; and Bill has made her swear she won't tell anybody where he's carried to. She told me to thank you for her, and she's a good soul." With these words, the stranger disappeared.

Mr. Atherton was grieved thus to lose sight of the wretched man, who had occupied his



thoughts during nearly the whole of the night. He was comforted, however, by recollecting that though removed from his influence, he was still under the eye of an all-merciful Redeemer, to whom he most earnestly prayed that he might be rescued from perdition. His mind, however, was so perturbed that it was difficult for him to apply it to the discourse which he had resolved to write for the following Sunday; but it was gradually calmed by reflection and prayer, and on Saturday evening he was quite prepared for the ensuing day.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE UNEXPECTED MEETING.

“ Speak gently to the erring,  
Thou yet mayst lead them back,  
With holy words and tones of love,  
From misery’s thorny track.”

ON the Sunday after Dr. Welford’s return, his church was crowded to overflowing. “ We shall have something very fine to-day, I presume,” said Mr. Melville, as he showed a stranger up the isle, whom he had invited to listen to the far-famed rector of St. Philip’s. When the voluntary on the organ ceased, and Herbert Atherton entered the chancel, there was a universal appearance of disappointment.

“ A mere boy,” whispered an old gentleman, contemptuously, to his neighbor, who was equally venerable.

“ I wonder what our pastor means,” said a lady, in a tone of irritation. “ If Dr. Welford is not going to officiate here, even when he is at home, we might as well go to some other church.” This comment was whispered to Mrs. Waterford,

who made no reply, and the irreverent buzzing was hushed by the first words of the service, which were pronounced in a full, clear voice of unusual depth and solemnity.

The question had never passed through the mind of the clergyman whether he would be welcomed by the congregation. He was an ambassador delivering a message from the King of kings. What was it to him whether the criminals to whom he came with proffers of mercy, liked his manner and appearance? His message was every thing—himself nothing. But his own profound reverence for the office which he held insensibly affected his hearers; and by the time that the reading of the second lesson was concluded, a deep silence had fallen upon the whole congregation. This was broken by the chanting of the full choir, which was succeeded by the Creed, uttered with a solemnity with which it had seldom been pronounced, and in the following prayers, the responses were remarkable for their fervency.

When the clergyman ascended the pulpit, there was an expression of curiosity in the faces of many who were present, for his whole voice and manner were so peculiarly earnest, that there was an undefined expectation that his preaching

would be of an uncommon kind. His appearance may have added to this impression, for Herbert stood in the midst of that crowded church absorbed with one idea, the fearful responsibility of preaching the Gospel of Christ. "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O Lord," was a portion of the prayer which he uttered as he bowed his head, and then he lifted his face, radiant with spiritual loveliness, and announced as his text, as if it had been just breathed into his own ear by some invisible being, "Why have ye agreed together to tempt the Holy Ghost?" The subject of the discourse was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, and the inquiry how far it now infected the Church of Christ. The minister remarked upon the fact, that the most severe displeasure of the Almighty had fallen upon those who were members of his Church, and yet withheld from him that entire consecration of themselves and their property, which was their lawful service. It was wonderful that a similar judgment did not befall those who in this age were tempting the Holy Ghost by rendering the homage of a divided heart! The unholy union now attempted between God and man was denounced by Scripture, and in direct opposition to the spirit of the Church to which they belonged; yet many

of those loud in religious profession, reserved a large share of their thoughts, their time, and their affections for this perishing world. Even in that very sanctuary, Mammon was worshipped. Why was it that they spoke exultingly of the beauty of that temple? When Solomon had built one of surpassing glory, his feeling was that of deep humility, and he exclaimed, "The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee : how much less this house that I have builded !" Wherefore did they pride themselves on the possession of the most conspicuous seats ; would their confessions of penitence ascend more readily from thence to the throne of the Almighty ?

"If this spirit is in the Church, it is not of it," he continued with increasing earnestness. "You come up these aisles with a haughty air, and seating yourselves, commence irreverently communicating your thoughts to each other, when met only to hold intercourse with the invisible God. Do you not hear the words proclaimed from the sacred desk, 'The Lord is in his holy temple ; let all the earth keep silence before him ?' and again, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.' Proud men and gay women stand around that font, as sponsors to a young immortal, whose little frame has been decked

with all the elegance with which it can be adorned ; but they have come to promise in its name that it shall renounce the ‘pomp and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.’ Why do they thus agree to tempt the Holy Ghost, by pretending to consecrate a soul to its Maker, and then doing all in their power to withdraw it from his service ?

“ ‘Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world,’ resounds in your ears from this holy place, and again and again you ask deliverance from ‘the world, the flesh, and the devil.’ You have renewed at this altar the promise of your childhood, to renounce all its pomps and vanities ; yet you go forth to strive for its rewards, to mingle in its pleasures, and to drink deep of its spirit. Oh my brethren, ‘why have you agreed thus to tempt the Holy Ghost ?’ ”

It would be impossible to do justice to the unstudied eloquence with which these words were delivered. There was a deep and breathless silence till the conclusion of the discourse ; and this lasted till the benediction was pronounced, and then the congregation slowly dispersed. The few remarks which were made with regard to the sermon were the most fitting testimony to its excellence ; for men rarely wish to dis-



cuss that preaching which has touched their hearts.

During the ensuing week, Mr. Atherton was returning one morning from a visit to Dr. Welford, when he met a young lady dressed in deep mourning escorted by Harry Melville. The latter touched his hat respectfully, but Herbert could hardly command himself sufficiently to return his salutation, so much was he struck by the appearance of his fair companion.

"Yes, it is Agnes," he said, as they disappeared from his sight, and a strange giddiness came over his brain, while a violent pain shot through his heart. With a strong effort, he mastered this weakness, and was able to reach a stage which was just passing, in which he seated himself, trembling with emotion.

Mrs. Waterford saw, the moment he entered the house, that he had met with some agitating adventure; but she asked no questions, and sent the little girls out of the room, because they insisted on knowing why he looked so ill. He only said that he did not care for any dinner, and then went to his own apartment, where he remained alone till evening.

Of all trials, that which is most rarely appreciated by others, or indeed seldom known by

them, is the struggle to overcome a misplaced affection. Deeply, earnestly, Herbert prayed to be assisted in conquering his own heart; but it throbbed tumultuously with grief, and his thoughts would ever revert to the object of his intense and unextinguishable affection. The very ardor of his feelings explained the reason why it had been deemed best by Infinite Wisdom that he should not be allowed their unfettered exercise.

"I know it is right, O Father!" he exclaimed: "I am too prone to idolatry to have been permitted the possession of my heart's desire; but oh, sanctify her to thyself; deliver her from the fetters of sin." Gently, at last, peace stole to his heart; and then, with a face of calm submission, he left his apartment.

How many such struggles are witnessed only by the Almighty! seen perhaps with the same approbation as the sacrifice of Abraham; for they terminate in the renunciation of the heart's dearest treasure, in obedience to his most holy will.

That evening Mr. Atherton called at Mr. Melville's, and was informed that Miss Cameron, a ward of that gentleman, had just left in the steamer for Savannah. She had only arrived in

the city on Saturday, having been at the Springs during the summer months.

"She asked," said Harry Melville, carelessly, "whether we had met you, and said something about your being an old acquaintance."

Herbert had not sufficient self-command to make any inquiries, but the manner in which Agnes was mentioned by the gay young man, left no doubt in his mind that she was still a devotee to the world.

One night in the beginning of September, Herbert Atherton was aroused from slumber by what sounded like a man's footstep in the hall which led to his chamber. He knew that both the coachman and waiter were in the habit of going home to their families at night, and therefore was startled by the approach of a stealthy tread to the closet which was situated directly opposite to his own door. He heard the key turn in the lock distinctly, and rising in haste threw on his clothes, and noiselessly opened his own door. The closet was open, and a man was just lifting down from an upper shelf the wicker basket in which Mrs. Waterford always kept the table-silver. The robber was examining the contents, when he distinctly heard the words, "Thou shalt not steal," pronounced slowly by a voice at

his very ear. He started in alarm, and turning round, saw a pair of calm, dark eyes fixed mournfully upon him. The sight of a human being seemed to be a relief from the superstitious dread with which the thief had been assailed; but there was something still of fear in his manner as he asked in a rough voice,

“How came you here? what do you want?”

“To save you from crime,” was the reply, as Mr. Atherton still stood gazing fixedly upon him.

“You had better go back to bed then,” said the man hastily, “or you will tempt me to commit another, and break your pate.”

Mr. Atherton took no notice of this threat, but asked calmly, “What tempts you to this new act of wickedness, when you have just been rescued from the jaws of death, my poor fellow?”

The kindness of the clergyman’s voice was strange to the ear of the midnight robber.

“Want!” he exclaimed bitterly, “wretchedness and want are my temptations. My child is dead of starvation, and my wife is a vagabond;” and at this thought, he again reached his hand towards the basket of silver.

“Stop, my poor friend,” said Mr. Atherton in a voice of gentle authority. “Come with me into my chamber, and I will give you something

for the supply of your necessities, which will save you from committing a new crime."

The robber mechanically followed the young man into his room, and stood gazing at him gloomily, while he went to his desk, and taking out his pocket-book, drew from it a small roll of bank notes. Then a struggle passed over the hardened features of the thief. He looked at the slender, delicate frame of his companion, as if calculating with what ease he could master him, and possess himself of all his money; and then his eye ran over the gentle, loving face, which turned upon him with a look of deep sympathy and commiseration. "No, I cannot touch you," he exclaimed. "If all men were like you I would not be such a villain."

"God's grace has alone made us to differ," said Herbert, meekly. "Here are twenty dollars. I have no more by me at present, but if they will not be enough to supply your most pressing wants, tell me and I will bring you more to-morrow."

"Why do you give me this?" asked the robber, "to prevent my doing you harm?"

"That is out of your power," said his companion calmly: "you could not really hurt me, although you might take my life. It is for your own good, only, that I wish you to take



this money, which is freely yours, and leave this house in peace."

The sincerity of this reply reached the heart of the poor victim of sin, and warm tears moistened his swollen and blood-shot eyes.

"If there be a God, he will bless you," was his reply, and he turned hastily from the apartment, as if afraid that his new-formed resolution was too weak to venture upon a moment of delay.

Mr. Atherton accompanied him in silence to the door through which he had effected his entrance; and then said, kindly, "Now tell me where you live, that I may try and furnish you with employment."

"Employment!" said his companion in the same scornful tone, which he had used when speaking of the justice of his Maker. "Who will give employment to me, when they know where the last two years of my life have been passed? Haven't I tried it, and didn't they spurn me from their doors the moment that was known. Look at me! would you employ a fellow with such a face as mine?"

Mr. Atherton could not deny that it would be a risk to engage the services of a man whose appearance was so deeply impressed with the



stamp of evil; but his charity never failed, and he said cheerfully, "If you will only resolve to give up what is wrong, your family will be provided honestly with bread."

The robber could not doubt the truth of this promise, and after a moment's hesitation, said, "You will find us in an empty carriage-house, belonging to the livery stable, next the Clifton Hotel."

"I will seek you there without fail," said Mr. Atherton. "Now go home and thank God that you have been saved from the crime that you meditated."

## CHAPTER VI.

## AN EXPERIMENT.

“He who finds a fellow-mortal,  
His precious soul by vice enchained,  
And brings him back from ruin’s portal,  
Has done the task for Christ ordained.”

It was not strange that the young clergyman passed a sleepless night, after the interview related in the last chapter. He was sorely puzzled to discover in what manner to find employment for a person of such vicious character and habits, without risking the lives or property of others. As soon as day dawned he rose, being determined to see the midnight intruder as early as possible, so as to give him no time for committing any farther depredations.

After commending himself, in a short prayer, to the care of his heavenly Father, and asking his aid in endeavoring to seek and to succor one of those lost beings for whom the Saviour died, Herbert proceeded through various winding lanes and obscure alleys to the disreputable neighbor-

hood of the Clifton Hotel. It was difficult to discover the spot to which he had been directed, among the numerous dilapidated buildings that crowded the filthy yard behind that den of iniquity. Herbert was assisted, however, by the sight of a well-remembered figure entering a low hovel, more fit for the shelter of a beast than of men. As the door was unhung, the gentle tap of the young clergyman was instantly heard, and answered by a fierce inquiry of what he wanted, and a command to go about his business.

"My business," said the intruder mildly, as he stepped within the door, "is to see you, my friend, and discover how I can best serve you."

"Ah! is it you?" asked Brown in a now civil tone, as he recognized the features of his benefactor. "Have you repented of last night's deed, and come to claim your property?"

"By no means," was the animated reply. "Let us trust each other fully, and then we shall have no trouble. I have no earthly motive in coming here but to try and persuade you to be willing to live henceforward an honest life, and then to aid you in so doing. Where is your wife?"

"There," said the man, as he pointed to what Herbert had mistaken for a heap of old clothes

in the corner of the miserable apartment, adding more gently, "Poor Sally! We won't wake her. She has not slept so sound for many a night as since I told her of your kindness, and my wish that I could lead a better life."

"And you are really in earnest in that wish?" said Herbert, looking fixedly at his companion, on whose face the red morning light was falling through the large cracks in the broken roof above them.

"Does a man like to have hell within him?" asked the other fiercely. "Do you suppose I ever have a moment's peace. I learned too much when I was a child to be easy leading such a devil's life. God knows what a miserable wretch I am!"

"My poor fellow," said Herbert, as involuntarily he extended his hand and clasped in it that of the felon, which was fairly shaking with emotion.

It was the first time for years that he had received such a mark of sympathy, and the act went to his very heart. How warm, how soft, how pure that delicate hand felt, and how quietly it bore the rough gripe with which it had been seized! It seemed as if this single motion had more of sincerity in it than could have been expressed in any words.

The best of men, in approaching the vicious, stand as it were at a distance, repelled by their horror of vice. Herbert shrank from sin as from a serpent; but in the basest of human beings saw some fragment of the image in which they were created, and owned his relationship as a fellow-creature, saved from like defilement only by the grace of God.

"Was your mother a religious woman?" he asked, after a long pause, during which the face of his companion showed the workings of strong emotion.

"There never was a better!" he replied, becoming still more agitated. "Thank God, she went to her rest before I became such a wretch."

"Perhaps she sees you now, and is rejoicing that better feelings are springing up in your heart," said Herbert encouragingly.

A low, deep sob was the only answer to this suggestion, for the tide of early recollections which had rushed over that sin-hardened heart could no longer be resisted. The poor victim of guilt sank down on a stone beside the door, and, covering his face, wept tears of anguish.

The clergyman stood by in silence, lifting up his heart in prayer. He felt as if the spirit of

God were very near, and earnestly asked that his pleadings might be heard.

Gradually the heavy sobs died away, and that bowed figure seemed changed to stone. Was he listening to the still, small voice within? Ah! if his ear could have been opened to the melodies of Heaven, he might have heard that sweetest of all angelic songs—the anthem of praise over a sinner that prayeth. For a whole hour Herbert awaited in patience the result of this fearful struggle with the powers of evil. When his companion at length lifted up his face, an involuntary exclamation of thanksgiving burst from the clergyman's lips, for its expression was as gentle as that of a child.

“With God's help, I will be a better man,” said Brown, in a low voice. “Pray for me, sir, that I may keep this resolution. But not now,” he added, “for I see some men coming this way whom you had better avoid.”

“Have no fears for me,” said Herbert kindly. “I cannot leave you till we have arranged some plan for the future. Did you expend any of the money I gave you last night in providing food for the day?”

“No, sir,” said Brown. “I came directly home, and have been thinking ever since so



much of my own wickedness, that I forgot I was hungry. I do not like now to go out, for I am afraid to offer your notes at any decent place, for fear they will think that such a looking being could not have come by them honestly."

"Well, then, here is some change," said Herbert, "for you to get breakfast for Sally and yourself, while I go home to my own. I will see that she has a decent suit of clothes, and then she can procure for you what you need, so that you will be ready for employment. Keep out of the way of temptation as much as possible till I return, and remember that an all-powerful Friend is at your side, and he will strengthen you."

His companion could not utter a word in reply, but he took that pale hand again between his own, and, pressing it against his full heart, looked up to heaven with an expression of unutterable gratitude.

When Herbert reached home he found the family assembled for prayers. Mrs. Waterford was struck with the animated expression of his countenance when he entered, and by the remarkable fervency with which he uttered a prayer for all such as were troubled in mind and tempted of Satan.

At breakfast Herbert hardly spoke, and seemed

to have entirely lost his appetite, for he was pondering upon the expediency of asking Mrs. Waterford's advice. He feared lest her repose in future might be disturbed if she was made acquainted with the circumstance of the midnight visit, but decided at last upon making her his confidant. As soon as the children had left the table, he gave her a brief account of his visit to the Browns a few weeks previous, and then related the last night's adventure.

Mrs. Waterford was too sincere a Christian to be much alarmed at any terror by night, and her thoughts never rested for an instant upon the danger in which she had been of losing valuable property, but were immediately absorbed in the desire to aid Mr. Atherton.

"There has lately been formed a society," she said, after some reflection, "for providing those who have been released from prison with suitable employment. I remember now that I subscribed to it, and that my friend Mr. Nugent is one of the managers. I will either go to him myself or give you a note of introduction, and he will assist you, I have no doubt, for he is a most excellent and judicious man.

"Thank you," said Herbert warmly. "I will see him instantly, for no time must be lost in

taking advantage of the poor fellow's penitent frame of mind. While I am gone," he added, as he rose from the table, "will you have the kindness to try and find some clothes for Sally? I believe she is in need of every thing. But I forgot that I should want your note of introduction."

"You shall have it forthwith," said Mrs. Waterford, as she followed him into the library.

Mr. Nugent was fortunately at home, and listened to Mr. Atherton's narrative with deep interest.

"The case of this man," he said, "is that of hundreds. On being released from prison, there seems no alternative but to plunge into fresh crime, and it has needed much study to find employment which might put them out of the way of temptation. By your account, the only breach of human law of which this man has been intentionally guilty, was the attempted burglary of last night, if he really was in such a state of intoxication as not to have been conscious what he was doing when apprehended by the police. I can well understand how, finding himself covered with disgrace and suffering from want, he was led to this act, and am not afraid to trust him with employment. We have just made arrange-

ments with a railroad company to furnish them with a certain number of laborers to assist in digging a new road, some hundred miles in length. We have to become security for their honesty; but fortunately their temptations are few when thus employed, if too many of the same kind are not thrown together. We are going to send out a car-load this afternoon to a place about forty miles from the city, and if Brown and his wife will go, they shall, on reaching there, be provided with a comfortable home and constant employment."

"A most excellent plan," said Mr. Atherton, looking perfectly delighted at the idea of having his protégé thus provided for. "Removed from his present associates, and starting with a prospect of regaining his reputation, I have strong hopes that he will keep to his present resolutions."

Mrs. Waterford needed only a glance at her enthusiastic friend, on his return, to be assured that his mission was successful.

"Where are Sally's clothes?" he asked eagerly. "Please have them put into my little travelling bag, and I will take them immediately."

"Shall I not send a servant with you?" asked Mrs. Waterford, smiling at his eagerness.

"Oh, no!" he replied quickly. "I think we should be very careful about sending them on such errands. They might form very injurious acquaintances. Besides, the wretched like as few spectators as possible of their misery. My portmanteau will not be heavy, and I always carry it myself when on a journey."

Mrs. Waterford made no further objection to his proposal, but rolling up into as small a compass as possible the different articles of dress, packed them into the portmanteau.

Herbert was thinking so intently, that he was taken quite by surprise, when he again found himself standing before the Clifton Hotel. On entering the yard behind it, he was somewhat troubled at seeing Brown's habitation closed, and knocked at the door with a sinking heart, asking himself if it was possible that he could have been mistaken in the man's sincerity. His fears were banished by the sound of footsteps within, and the removal of the stone which had been rolled up against the door.

"I shut myself in," said Brown civilly, "because I did not want any one to know I was here. How quickly you have returned, sir!"

Before her husband could say any more, Sally had thrown herself at the feet of the visitor, but



was weeping so violently that she could not utter a syllable. He raised her gently, and handing her the portmanteau, said,

“Here, my good woman, a friend has sent you some clothing; and while your husband and I go outside for a little conversation, you must dress yourself, for we have no time to lose.”

She looked her thanks, and Brown followed Herbert into the yard, and heard with deep gratitude the arrangements that had been made by Mr. Nugent for his leaving the city.

“It will be easier to be good,” he said, “when I can see the trees and the sky; it is so hard to believe there is a God in such a wretched place as this.”

Mr. Atherton, after explaining fully the manner in which his companion was to be employed, gave him much excellent advice, and placed in his hands a Bible and Prayer-book, which he had brought with him from home for that purpose. Just as he did so, Sally opened the door, and a glance of satisfaction shot from her husband's eyes at her altered appearance. It would have been difficult for Mr. Atherton to have recognized her as the same person from whom he had parted an hour before; for, in the neat chintz dress, gingham bonnet, and tidy shawl, with



which she had been furnished by Mrs. Waterford, Sally was a most respectable-looking woman.

"Here is an order," said that gentleman, "upon a tailor who lives in Crayton-street, for whatever your husband may need. Take it with you, and return as soon as you can. But stop; you will want some crockery for your house-keeping, and a few little articles of furniture and bedding. Never mind, though, now about them; we will see to it that they are at the station-house this afternoon, and the freight-train will take them down this evening."

Sally looked quite puzzled at this address, and said wonderingly, "Where are you going? what are we to do with furniture?"

When the poor woman heard that they were really to leave the city, and commence once more a decent life, she was perfectly beside herself with joy.

"You will never be able to buy what I want, Sally," said Brown, who was quite overcome at the delight of his own poor wife.

"Oh yes, I shall," she replied, trying to compose herself, and wiping her eyes with her new gingham apron. "But it must be all a dream, a blessed dream."

When Mr. Atherton related to Mrs. Waterford

the delight of these two poor creatures at the very idea of escaping from their misery, she was almost as much affected as Sally herself. She went immediately to procure them whatever was needful to render them comfortable in the little shanty which they were to occupy, and which Mr. Nugent had assured Mr. Atherton was perfectly neat and comfortable. At two o'clock, by agreement, the latter repaired to the centre station-house, to await the arrival of the travellers : when a tall, decent-looking man, accompanied by a tidy little woman, entered the room where he was sitting, and asked civilly for a ticket in the second-class cars, he did not recognize his acquaintance, nor was it till the large, dark eye of the new-comer met his own that he knew who he was. On perceiving his friend, Brown hesitated an instant, as if he feared that he might feel degraded by his speaking to him in so public a place ; but Mr. Atherton stepped forward and said kindly, as he held out his hand,

“I am glad to see you. The cars do not start for some minutes, and we can take a turn on the platform and talk over matters, while your wife sits here and takes care of that little trunk in the corner, which a friend of mine has sent here for her use.”

So saying, he walked out upon the porch behind the station-house, and remained there for some time, earnestly impressing upon his companion the necessity of leading a life of watchfulness and prayer.

"I will come and see you," he concluded, "in a few weeks ; and I hope I shall hear before that time that you are giving satisfaction to your employers. Look to your Saviour for guidance and strength, and never give way to despair. If any one discovers the history of your past life, and reproaches you with crime, you must be neither angry nor cast down, but take refuge in the thought, that the blood of Christ has blotted out all your transgressions, and that he will clothe you in his own righteousness. Fix your eyes on the prize set before you, not the sorrows through which you have passed, and may God give you the victory."

At this moment, the whistle of the engine was heard, and they returned therefore to the room where Sally had been left, and after a few words to her of counsel and encouragement, Mr. Atherton bade them both farewell, with a fervent "God bless you," and a smile so warm and cheering that it pervaded their inmost souls.

Frank met his beloved teacher at the door of

their house with a face beaming with contentment.

"I have got all my lessons," he said eagerly, "and written down my Latin and my Greek, so that you can look them over; and my sums are all done and proved."

"Bravo! my boy," said Mr. Atherton with delight. "You have done better than I expected. I was not afraid to leave you for a morning to yourself; but I hardly thought you would have been quite so diligent."

"And I have played teacher, too," said Frank, as he ushered him into the library: "mother trusted me with Mary and Fanny, as she was very busy; and just see what a nice little composition Mary has written, and how well Fanny can read this story in short words."

"Yes, do hear me, cousin Herbert," said Fanny, as she jumped on his knee and began: "'A-man-had-a-dog-not-so-old-as-I-am.' Is not that nice?" she asked, shaking back her soft curls, and looking up eagerly for approbation.

Herbert kissed her glowing cheek, and said affectionately, "That does nicely for such a little girl; now let me hear what Mary has written."

"Let me read it, Mary," said Frank with quite

a patronizing air ; it will sound better if I do. Mine never seem so good as when Mr. Herbert reads them. Mary took her own subject, sir : she has given a description of her little canary bird. You know she is only eight, and can't write very plain. Here it is :

“ ‘ I have a little pet whose name is Dick. It is a yellow bird that papa once brought me from a warm country, where he had been ; and that is why I love it. He eats seeds and sugar, and sings all day, and lives in a cage made of gold wire, which I think is very nice. But once I was afraid he felt bad to stay there shut up, so I let him out, but he hopped round a little, and then went back again. Now, I think he loves to stay where he is, and I try to make him happy, and give him all he wants.

“ ‘ God made my little bird, and he must be very wise to know how to make such pretty little feathers, and such bright eyes, and very good to make a little thing of no use only just to sing and enjoy itself.’

“ ‘ There !’ said Frank with delight, “ don't you call that a nice composition ? I told Mary that you said the way to write was to take some subject we knew all about, and say just what we thought, and to try and find out some moral to

it—some way by which we might be better for thinking of it.”

Mr. Atherton praised the little ones sufficiently to encourage them, without making them vain, and then listened to their bright, pleasant conversation till they were all summoned to dinner.



## CHAPTER VII.

## A GLEAM OF SUNSHINE.

“ My every hope has changed its name,  
And flown beyond the grave ;  
If thou art there, and still the same,  
No earthly love I crave.”

“ ARE you not going to church with us to-day, Harry ?” asked Mr. Melville, one bright Sabbath morning in November.

“ What’s the bill of fare ?” was the question of his son, in reply, as he lounged back in one of the large velvet arm-chairs, and looked complacently at the small boot reposing on an ottoman near him. The inquiry did not in the least startle the person to whom it was addressed, though it called forth an almost inaudible sigh from his daughter.

“ Very good,” he replied ; “ Bishop N—— in the pulpit, Signora Balesdi in the choir, and Dr. Nathan in the desk, and Twining at the lecture. By the way, they say that his reading is better than the last lecturer on Shakspeare ; the one, I mean, who has just made his exit from the stage.”

“Rather inviting,” said Harry, nonchalantly, but when I go anywhere to church I like a little variety from my week-day amusements, and going to St. Philip’s is only another form in which the goddess fashion is worshipped : I think I shall patronize the Chapel of St. Barnabas this morning.”

“Why, my son !” exclaimed Mrs. Melville, who had just entered in time to hear his concluding remark. “You must be beside yourself, to think of going there. Do you know the audience is made up of gamblers, pickpockets, and sots.”

“Well, what of that !” he replied in the same indifferent tone. “Don’t you say at St. Philip’s, every Sabbath, that you are all sinners ? Where’s the difference ?”

“But nobody means by this comparison,” replied Mr. Melville, drawing himself up complacently, “that they have committed any such enormities. It is understood, of course, that the sins we mention are not accounted such among men ; pride, perhaps, or excessive anger, or a neglect of religious duties.”

Harry could not help smiling at this interpretation of prayers so deep in their expressions of contrition that he had never been able to take

them on his lips since his childhood, from a consciousness that such repentance found no echo in his heart, and must, if sincere, lead to newness of life.

"You must excuse me then henceforth from attending St. Philip's, for I must plead guilty to being somewhat akin to the congregation of St. Barnabas. I assure you that I am comparatively guiltless of pride and excessive anger, but gamble at cards and billiards, pick my neighbors' pockets in a business way, and if not a sot, drink enough wine daily to make myself one, if I had not been used to it from infancy."

"How you do talk!" said Mrs. Melville, impatiently, as she finished drawing on her glove, and turned to leave the room.

"It is astonishing, my son," said Mr. Melville, "how, with all the religious advantages you have enjoyed, you can so coolly neglect public worship, and own without shame that you consider yourself guilty of the most disgraceful and ungentlemanly of vices."

During this conversation, Isabella Melville had been silent, but her cheek was flushed, and her eyes were filled with tears. As her father and mother left the room, she paused an instant, and said very meekly, "Dear Harry, do come

with us. Whatever may be the interpretation of any one, you will find that the language of the Prayer-book is adapted to the confession of sins such as yours, and I am sure of your hearing from God's word, and his ministers, truths that can make you 'wise unto salvation,' if you will listen in a right spirit."

"I would like to please you, Bell," he answered, kindly, as he rose from his seat, and adjusted his collar, "but indeed I have taken a fancy to go to St. Barnabas this morning. I am sure you will not object to my doing so, if you think it will make me any better."

"No, indeed!" she replied, with warmth. "May God's grace go with you there, my dear brother."

Harry looked affectionately at her gentle, lovely countenance, and then kissing her tenderly, said in a low, serious tone, "Pray for me, Bell, for indeed I need your prayers more than you dream."

A few weeks after this conversation, as Mr. Atherton was passing in front of Mr. Melville's residence, he saw Harry standing on the steps. The clergyman paused an instant, and made some remark on the beauty of the day, and the grace of a fine horse, who was impatiently paw-

ing the ground, while waiting for his young master to take his seat in the light buggy that had just driven up to the door. Harry replied very courteously to these remarks, and then said with more earnestness, "I wish you would ride with me this morning; I have had half a fancy to come and see you for the last week or two, but never could get quite up to the mark."

Mr. Atherton was taken by surprise, and for a moment hesitated whether he should accept the invitation, though he was only walking for exercise. Before venturing voluntarily into the company of those who were decidedly immoral, he always asked himself two questions: "Can I do them any good, and am I strong enough to resist their evil influence?" A remembrance that flashed through his mind of having seen the gay young man for several Sundays among his own congregation, made him believe it possible that deeper thoughts were working under his careless exterior, and this he deemed a sufficient reason for risking any remarks which might be made upon his public appearance in such apparently uncongenial society.

Harry waited for his decision politely, and as he answered in the affirmative, remarked, archly,



“So you think there is enough hope of me to venture being seen in my company? I thank you for the charitable conclusion. Pray tell me by what steps you arrived at it?” he added, as he seated himself in the buggy at Mr. Atherton’s side, and taking the reins in his own hand, dismissed the groom, and drove rapidly towards the suburbs of the city.

“I have thought,” replied Mr. Atherton more gravely, “ever since we first met, that there was much reason to hope that you would some day become a religious man. This opinion was induced by the correct view you seemed to have with regard to Christian duty, and your frank acknowledgment that I was right in giving a decision, contrary to your own wishes.”

“I did not think you became so hopeful, thus early in our acquaintance,” said Harry with surprise. “Your charity must live on very little food; but I suppose you have seen me among your graceless congregation, and that helped to keep it alive.”

“It would not, perhaps, have done so,” replied Mr. Atherton, “if it had not been for the opinion I had previously formed; for curiosity might have sent you thither, or that spirit of opposition which sometimes makes the votaries of fashion



visit the most out of the way corners of the earth."

Harry smiled. "Well!" he said frankly, "I own that curiosity and a savage delight in shocking my elegant mamma, did have an influence in sending me thither, at first, but I had another motive even then. Do you remember the morning you preached for Dr. Welford, there was a young lady with our family at church, whom you had known in Havana, a Miss Cameron?"

"Was she there?" asked Herbert with an emphasis, which would have excited his companion's notice, if he had not been busy with his own thoughts.

"Yes," he replied, "and she went purposely to hear you, for she had almost given up attending church at all, for the same reasons which made me so much of a stranger at St. Philip's. We had been talking, that morning, of our contempt of the pitiable hypocrisy of Christian people, and congratulated ourselves that we were quite as good as many of them; and had at least one sin less to answer for. We owned that the world was our god, and did it much more laudable service than the avowed followers of the meek and humble Saviour. I told her I could never join in the responses with a heart so full

of sin ; and she declared that if ever she were confirmed, she should feel bound to give up almost every thing in life, that she now prized, admiration, luxury, pomp, and pleasure. We chatted carelessly on our way to church, making now and then a jesting remark as some splendidly arrayed lady made a sanctified nod on her way to the house of worship which she deemed most fashionable, and after we were seated in the pew, she pointed out to me, with evident amusement, the Pharisaical sobriety of some gentleman with whom we had parted at the opera at a late hour on the preceding evening. The moment you entered the church, her manner underwent an entire change. She grew very pale, and her eyes filled with tears, which she sought to wipe away without being observed. So evident was her desire to escape notice, that I did not look towards her till the sermon was half over, and then I saw that she was fearfully agitated. I had not listened to what you had been saying previously, being entirely absorbed in my own thoughts, nor did I afterwards hear a sentence, for I expected every moment Miss Cameron would be obliged to leave the church. She remained, however, till the services were concluded, and then I noticed that though she had

not bowed her head even on entering, she threw herself on her knees, and remained in that position till the congregation had dispersed. I felt that my company at such a time would be distasteful, so I did not join her on leaving church, and she rode home with Bell and my mother.

"The rest of the day she remained in her room under the plea of a headache, though my sister told me that she had no doubt the sight of you had recalled the melancholy circumstances attending her aunt's death, and this was the reason why she had been so much agitated. But I have been making a very long story, in trying to give you my reason for first coming to your chapel."

"Go on, if you please," said Mr. Atherton in a low, suppressed voice, for his agitation was almost insupportable.

"Well then, to cut it short—Miss Cameron returned home the next day, looking as if she had had a severe spell of illness, and so she did have immediately after her return."

As he mentioned this fact, Harry's voice trembled, but he mastered it and continued. "When she got well she was an altered being; at least, so every one says, and since that time, her letters to Bell have all been of the most serious kind, and next April she intends to be confirmed."

"God be thanked!" exclaimed Herbert, almost rising from his seat, while he clasped his hands in ecstasy.

Harry turned and looked at him in astonishment, and then an expression of displeasure came over his face. "I should think," he said, "that you were rejoicing over some of your cut-throat congregation. Miss Cameron was always a most moral and excellent young lady, and I can see no great reason for such marvellous joy, that she is going to rank herself with a set of people who are half of them hypocrites."

His words fell unheeded on the ear of his companion, who was absorbed in the one delightful thought: "She is saved, and, thank God, by my instrumentality. This is too much happiness."

Struck with his companion's silence, Harry again looked inquiringly towards him; but the expression of his countenance was more eloquent than words. Although his large deep eyes were full of tears, there was a smile of ineffable sweetness upon his lips, and every feature was radiant with rapture. Harry gazed in wonder at such spiritual loveliness, and forgot for a moment even the tidings which had caused such delight, in trying to conceive why any one should thus rejoice over the soul of another.

The two young men rode on in perfect silence for several minutes, both absorbed in their own thoughts. Mr. Atherton first spoke, and his voice was as dreamy as if he had just awakened from sleep.

"How was Mr. Cameron pleased with this change?" he asked.

"Mr. Cameron!" said Harry in surprise. "Do you not know that he died a year since, and that Agnes lives with her uncle?"

"Dead!" repeated Mr. Atherton mournfully. "An orphan! Poor Agnes!"

"Her father was no great comfort to her at the last," said Harry. "He became very intemperate; drinking, it was said, to drown his own miserable thoughts."

"Poor Agnes!" again repeated Mr. Atherton, with an accent of the deepest commiseration.

Harry could not enter into the sympathy of his companion for a daughter weeping over the grave of a father, which could only be rendered doubly mournful by clearer views of God's infinite justice, and again both relapsed into silence.

It was nearly half an hour before the conversation was resumed, and then Herbert broke away from his own sweet meditations with an effort, and said,



"But you have not yet explained why you came to the chapel?"

"Simply to hear what kind of preaching had such an effect on Miss Cameron, with a half-formed hope that it might awaken my own heart; for I could not bear that her religion should make a gulf between us."

Herbert had been so engrossed with the one idea that the dearest wish of his heart had been fulfilled to notice the flush which suffused his companion's face whenever he mentioned Miss Cameron's name; but the tone in which this last remark was made aroused his suspicions. His glance of inquiry was answered instantly by Harry's saying frankly,

"Yes; I am deeply interested in that lady, and if we are separated now I shall be most miserable."

"Do I understand that there is any tie between you?" asked Herbert timidly.

"No bond that could not be broken," said Harry with evident pain; "but she had given me every reason to believe that my addresses were acceptable."

A sharp pang shot through Herbert's heart at this reply, and his face grew deadly pale. Now, when he might have conscientiously asked her love, it was about to be claimed by another.



But in an instant the Christian overcame the man, and he thanked God that she had become what he had wished, even if they should never meet on earth. No shadow of selfishness had darkened his earnest petitions for her salvation, and now no thought of his own loneliness could long sully his rejoicing over the fulfilment of those prayers. He made at the moment an earnest resolution to use all the influence which he possessed to render Harry worthy of her love, and then turning to him, said kindly,

“If indeed you have won her heart, you are a happy man, for it is a most noble one.”

The manner in which this remark was made dispelled at once any suspicion of jealousy, and Harry felt glad that his confidence had been given to one in whom it had excited such interest.

“Mr. Cameron,” he said, “left no fortune, and for this reason my father, though his early friend, objects to our union.”

“But you are in business at present, are you not?” asked Herbert, with self-forgetting interest.

“Nominally; but I have hardly thought of practising my profession. To tell you the truth, I have been throwing time, talents, and education all away. I am heartily sick of the life that I have led; and if you can show me how I can be-

come a better man, you will do me an unspeakable favor."

"Cease to do evil; learn to do well. Is not that a simple rule?"

"And what is to become of the past?" asked Harry, who was no longer endeavoring to conceal under a light tone the real seriousness of his thoughts.

"It is to be repented of and forgiven for Christ's sake, and then he is to be loved and served for his redeeming mercy. Open your Bible, my dear friend, with an earnest prayer for light on your path, and a firm resolution to follow its guidance, and you will be led into all truth. I see that we are nearly at home now. Come and see me very soon, and may God bless your endeavors to find him with eminent success."

Not a word more was spoken till the carriage stopped at the door of Mrs. Waterford's house, and with a silent shake of the hand the young men parted.

Mr. Atherton went directly to his own room, and the moment that he had closed the door knelt down and poured out the full tide of gratitude which had been swelling his heart almost to bursting. Time was obliterated. He stood at the portals of Eternity, and in imagination Agnes

was beside him. What was it to him that life divided them, if death could unite their souls in everlasting bliss? Would he have dared to ask that his earthly happiness should also be secured by the possession of his heart's treasure? No! He knew his own weakness, and thought perhaps it were safer that he should be intrusted with no fond heart here, lest it should withdraw his heart from heaven.

"There I can love her with no fear of idolatry, no dread of parting, no danger of change!" he exclaimed with rapture. "We shall be forever with the Lord!"

Hours had passed before the thoughts of Harry Melville's affection cast a single shadow over the pure joy of his spirit; and then it was only dimmed by the fear that her choice had fallen on one who could not guide her loving heart aright. Oh! with what fervency he asked for him Heaven's choicest gifts—that spirit which alone could make him a faithful soldier and servant of Christ unto his life's end. The prayer was as unselfish as that of a sinful mortal could be, and it entered into the ear of the Lord of Sabaoth.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## DISAPPOINTED HOPES.

“Religious was the charm  
I used affection to entice;  
And thought none burnt more bright or warm.”  
HABINGDEN.

Mrs. WATERFORD soon discovered, from the appearance of her young friend, that something had happened which gave him the purest joy. In his brightest moments, there had always been before traces of concealed anxiety, but now it was evident that his cheerfulness sprang up from an overflowing heart. Every duty was lighter, every day more full of hope; for if one seed sown in faith had thus germinated, might he not be planting many trees of righteousness, to adorn hereafter the garden of the Lord.

It is a noble work to toil on in darkness, uncheered by hope, but oh, what a blessed relief when a ray of light breaks through the clouds to assure us that our labor is not in vain! Now Herbert dreaded no future event, for he had

long felt that the only incurable sorrow that could befall him would be the hopeless death of his beloved Agnes. Often, in the twilight, he would sit gazing upon the mouldering embers on the hearth, and thinking, with inexpressible pleasure, of the time when he might enjoy that full communion of saints which can only be perfect when their holiness is secured forever. Then what sweet interchange there would be of thought and affection ! for here we see not only our Lord, but each other, through a glass, darkly ; but there our whole hearts can be revealed, fearless of displaying evil, or of unfolding feelings too deep to be understood. This was a peculiarly delightful reflection to Herbert, for his soul was filled with strong, earnest emotions that he could not explain, and in which no friend sympathized ; and often the burden of loneliness would have been insupportable if he had not been allowed the inexpressible relief of opening his heart to One who saw all its pulsations, and pitied its yearning for more complete fellowship than this earth can afford.

One evening during the week preceding Christmas, Herbert was sitting in his own room, thinking with what thankfulness he should that year welcome that ever joyful festival, when



Frank came in with a letter which had just been left at the door by one of the servants of Mr. Melville. Herbert opened it hastily, but trembled violently when he saw a note from Harry inclosing another in a delicate lady-like hand. Harry had only written these few words :

“I have received the inclosed letter, which I beg you to read. It has made me very miserable. Pray that I may have strength to bear this unexpected blow.”

The letter was from Miss Cameron, in answer to one which Harry Melville had addressed to her informing her of his own good resolutions, and asking to be considered as a suitor for her hand. It ran thus :

“MY DEAR SIR:—

“Your letter which I have just received has filled my heart with mingled emotions of joy and sorrow. I congratulate you most earnestly upon having formed a resolution henceforth to lead a righteous life, and ‘I pray unto God to give you his grace that you may continue in the same.’ How can we express our thankfulness, that our feet have been arrested in their downward course, and placed upon the Rock of Ages!

“One of the greatest hindrances to my own happiness at present, is the remembrance of the irreparable injury that I must have inflicted upon others, in the days of folly and sin. How often have I thought of the Sabbath morning which we passed together, and the worse than idle words which we then spoke! I am most grateful to be relieved from the fear of having confirmed you in the ways



of evil, by the manner in which I ridiculed all that was excellent. Now that we have discovered the plague of our own hearts, we can no longer wonder at the inconsistencies of Christians, for they too have to struggle against evil natures and evil examples as long as they live.

"You say that I have been the instrument by which you have been led to ponder your ways, and that you think your future progress would be insured if you could always be favored with my beneficial influence. I may have seemed the principal agent in arresting your attention; but I acted by the will of One, who has loved you with an everlasting love, and who, if you trust in Him, will always supply such means as are adapted to promote your growth in grace and holiness. I should dislike much, to believe that your present resolutions depended upon myself, for I cannot give you any hope of becoming your companion in that path, which, I trust, we are both sincere in desiring to tread.

"Do you not find that in the clear light, which has recently fallen upon your soul, many acts that appeared innocent, were worthy of entire condemnation? This is a discovery which I have made in reviewing that conduct which gave you reason to hope that I reciprocated your affection. I was then in the habit of receiving all the attention that was offered to me, without ever asking whether I was encouraging expectations which I could not answer; and when I found that this had been the case, an emotion of triumph was the only one which was excited. I had, however, a particular fancy for your society, and was not at all sure, myself, that any proposal on your part would not meet with a favorable reception. You were witty, and amused me, and no hypocrite, which pleased me. I was aware that you were idle and dissipated; but I did not expect morality in any man but a religious one, and no person who had any seriousness of mind could consistently desire such a trifler for a wife. Had my views continued

unaltered, it is more than probable that your suit would have received an answer in the affirmative, and two thoughtless lives would have been linked together.

“How different are my present feelings! Marriage seems to me a momentous step, which will quicken or retard my progress towards heaven, and which needs most earnest effort and prayer for the proper fulfilment of its arduous duties. Moreover, I cannot think that there is any other justifiable foundation for this connection than a deep and true affection, and this you have never excited; nor do I believe that the best love of which the heart is capable, can ever be called forth by any one whose noblest qualities have not been developed by sanctifying grace. Still, even were my affections engaged, my reason would not plead in your favor. We have both the mournful past to redeem, and its long-cherished habits of evil to conquer, and need some one to aid us, who is farther advanced in Christian knowledge. Besides, we are by nature impulsive and rash, quick-tempered and easily led astray; and, therefore, we should be in perpetual danger of drawing each other into error. You need a quiet, gentle wife, rich in Christian meekness and sobriety, and untainted by worldliness, whose very presence will act as a sedative upon your excitable spirit. I want, in a companion, manly decision and calm strength, with a dignity which can keep me in awe, and a force of principle that can resist all my influence. Would it be right, then, for me to choose one who might retard my upward progress, or to place a stumbling-block in your way?

“I know that you will not think calmly of this matter, now, and I fear that you will be tempted to return to the sins which you have just renounced. But oh, think of the misery which, according to your acknowledgment, they always occasioned, and for your own sake, hold fast to the principles which you first examined for mine. Too much of human love has entered into your religious

feelings to make them acceptable in His sight, who will not give his honor to another. No idol must intervene between our hearts and our Saviour, or our prayers will not reach his ears. Try and think that he has, in mercy, disappointed your earthly hopes, and bestow upon Him the love which has been offered to one so unworthy.

"I shall not be happy till I hear that you have forgiven me for having, apparently, trifled with your affection, and that you are steadfast in your resolutions to lead a new life. Write and tell me that you are not angry with me for the error which I so deeply deplore, and if we cannot be connected by a nearer tie, still own me as your sincere friend,

"AGNES CAMERON."

When Herbert had finished reading this letter, tears of gratitude sprang to his eyes, and he exclaimed aloud, "Blessed be God for all his mercies! My Agnes is indeed a Christian." Again he perused the epistle, with the same deep interest as at first, and again he ended with a fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving.

The sight of Harry's note recalled the pain which he must have suffered from the knowledge that his hopes were groundless, and this reflection moderated his own joyful emotions. "Poor fellow!" he thought, "I must go to him directly. No chastening for the present seemeth joyous, and now he feels his to be grievous indeed; yet I know that in the end it will bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness." With one

more affectionate glance at Miss Cameron's letter, as he replaced it in the envelope and put it into his bosom, Herbert left his apartment, and directed his steps towards the dwelling of his new friend.

It might seem almost incredible that while so devoted in his affection to Agnes, Herbert had not even thought that Harry's disappointment gave him more reason to hope that his own earthly happiness might yet be secured. But Christianity had so entirely triumphed over nature in his heart that he was for the time too entirely absorbed in delight at this proof of the change in Agnes, to remember that he had ever had any wish except that she should become a child of God. Then Harry occupied his thoughts so completely that there was no room for the intrusion of self, and he endeavored to devise some way of convincing the sorrowful young man that this blow was dealt in mercy.

Filled with such ideas, Herbert did not notice that he had reached Mr. Melville's house till his attention was attracted by the appearance of Harry at the door. He put out his hand to the latter kindly, and said, "I was just coming to see you, but as you are going out, we can walk together."

To this salutation Harry Melville made no reply, but he turned towards his companion a face so startling in its expression of misery that Herbert exclaimed, "Do not go out anywhere this evening. Indeed you are not well enough to stir from home. Come back, and let us talk over this matter which has made you so wretched."

"Thank you!" replied Harry, in a voice of strange and unnatural calmness, and without moving a muscle of his rigid countenance. "I am going to the theatre, which is a place you do not fancy. Pray leave me to follow my own course." As he said this, the wretched young man hurried past Herbert, and with a quick step walked towards the neighboring theatre.

"But you must speak to me," said Herbert, following him, and laying his hand on his arm; "I cannot let you go."

"By what right do you detain me?" asked Harry, in the same lifeless tone, withdrawing from the pressure of his hand as if it had been lead.

Herbert paused an instant, and then answered, with a voice of deep emotion, "By what right do I detain you? By the right of fellowship in suffering. I too have loved Agnes



Cameron, and know how hard a feeling it is to conquer."

At these words, Harry turned towards his companion a glance of surprise, and as he met the soft eyes of the young clergyman fixed upon him with an expression of the tenderest sympathy, the sternness passed from his own brow, and extending his hand, he said, in broken accents, "You feel for me! I see that you do."

Herbert took the offered hand, and drawing it within his own arm, led Harry back to his father's house. "We will go up to your own room," he said, "and I will tell you how truly I can appreciate your present wretchedness."

Harry made no answer, but led the way to his own apartment, and entering it, pointed to Herbert a seat by the fire, and then closing the door, turned the key and sank down in a chair, perfectly exhausted. Herbert saw that his weakness was mental, rather than physical, and therefore offered no assistance, but inwardly prayed that this severe trial might be blessed to his soul's health.

When Harry removed his hands from his face, it was perfectly colorless, and there was an expression of despair in his bloodshot, sunken eyes. Herbert gently approached him, and lay-



ing his hand kindly on his shoulder, said in a soothing tone,

“My *dear* friend! it is very, very hard. Your Saviour grieves to make you thus suffer, as a mother does to hear the cries of the child, whom she is forced to wean from her breast. He knows your every thought, and pities you more tenderly than I can do. Only trust in Him, and it will again be light.”

His companion's face did not change at these words; but he uttered a low expression of impatience at the attempt to offer religious consolation.

“Shall I tell you,” asked Herbert, “of my own similar disappointment, and how I was enabled to bear it?”

“Yes,” replied his companion, without relaxing a muscle.

With deep emotion, Herbert then related the history of his acquaintance with Miss Cameron, and described in the most touching manner the desolation of his own heart, when he felt that its idolatry must be renounced.

As Harry listened, his expression gradually softened; and when the narrator closed, his mood had entirely changed. He rose and walked up and down the room several times, wiping

hastily away the tears which now moistened his burning eyes, and seeking no longer to repress the deep-drawn sighs which relieved his burdened heart. Herbert watched him in silence till he again resumed his seat, and then he said kindly,

“The day will come, Harry, when you will look back to this hour, as I now do to that which separated me from Agnes, with gratitude for the love that spared no means which might secure my eternal happiness.”

“That can never be,” said Harry quickly : “I shall never see that this trial has been to me a blessing. It will drive me back to perdition—my blood will be upon her head.”

“Hush, hush, Harry ! you do not know what you say. You will not renounce the hope of a blessed heaven because you cannot choose your companion for this life. Think of the misery of sin, and the comparative happiness that you have known since you have endeavored to lead a holier life.”

“But my every thought has been of her,” he replied, with deep emotion. “The anticipation of heaven owed all its brightness to the idea that she would share it.”

“And is not that hope still left you ?” asked Herbert, soothingly. “Who knows how short

your life may be? and then come the blessed realities of a higher world and its endless joys."

"That is not to me a consoling thought," rejoined Harry bitterly. "My soul is in no fit condition to enter any abode of peace."

"Then you have something more to do on earth than to lament over your own vanished dreams of happiness. I fear, Harry, that the work of repentance has not been thorough in your heart, or you would more meekly receive the discipline of a merciful God."

"You are right," said Harry, with sad vehemence; "my reformation has been most shallow. I see it all now. It must have grievously offended my Maker. You have no idea what a wicked life I led. Faugh! The very remembrance of the scenes through which I have passed is disgusting. Agnes knew me too well. I am not fit to associate with any pure-minded woman. The stain of years of vice is upon my soul, and it can never be washed out."

"Only by the blood of Christ," interposed Herbert gently.

"I know that his blood cleanseth from all sin," replied Harry more meekly; "but it cannot blot out its remembrance from the polluted soul. Of this you know nothing; for I am sure that no

man can have the purity of heart and elevation of character which you possess who has ever mingled in such debasing society as I have kept for months and for years."

"I have not indeed been thus sorely tempted," said the young clergyman, with deep humility. "My early years were kept from the contagion of vice; and God allowed me when very young to place myself under the shadow of his wings, where I have since remained, free from those assaults to which men of more excitable temperaments are so often exposed. But oh! I can pity those who have to struggle with the power of habits so inveterate, and a memory so polluted, as to be ever ready to become the handmaid of sin."

Again there was a long pause, which Herbert filled with one of those silent prayers that, so often through the day, went up to his Maker, hallowing every scene, and fitting him for every varying circumstance of life.

Dark thoughts were in the mean time struggling in the soul of his companion. Well might Harry shrink from the view of his own wasted years, and those fearful scenes by which they had been disgraced!

Herbert knew that his friend must suffer

deeply before he could become a truly Christian man; but his heart bled at the sight of such agony. He remained with him till late at night, and when at last he rose to go, Harry exclaimed,

“If you will not stay, let me go home with you. I fear to trust myself alone.”

To this request Herbert gladly acceded, for he knew that this might be the turning point in the life of an immortal being, and he watched with fearful interest for the rising of the day-star in his darkened breast.



## CHAPTER IX.

## BERKLEY TRACT.

“But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild  
At every word,  
Methought I heard one calling ‘Child;’  
And I replied, ‘My Lord.’”

WHEN Mrs. Waterford came down to breakfast the next morning, she found Frank awaiting her in the library, evidently full of some important communication.

“Who do you think I saw in Mr. Atherton’s room just now, when I went to ask where my lessons were?” he exclaimed in great excitement.

“I cannot even guess,” replied Mrs. Waterford very quietly, although she was surprised at the question; for she did not know that Herbert had any friend in the city with whom he was sufficiently intimate to invite him to share his apartment in that unceremonious manner.

“Well, who in the world should it be,” continued Frank, “but that dissipated dandy Mr. Harry Melville, who is always lounging about the hotels, or driving tandem around the Park.”



“My son, I am astonished to hear you speak so of any gentleman, especially of a guest of mine, and a friend of Mr. Atherton,” said Mrs. Waterford, seriously.

“Now, mother, that is too bad, to call such a fellow a friend of his, when you know how good he is,” exclaimed Frank, reddening with indignation.

“Pray don’t allow yourself to become so much excited by a trifle, my dear. Do you remember who was once reproached with being the friend of publicans and sinners? Mr. Atherton is a true servant of his Divine Master, and with whomsoever he may associate, be assured that his chief object is to do them good.”

“I know that, mother, but I cannot bear to have him go with a fellow that I heard aunt Mary tell cousin James was not fit company for him,” said Frank.

“That might be,” replied his mother, “for James is very easily led astray; but Mr. Atherton can associate with Mr. Melville, I assure you, without endangering either his character or his reputation.”

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the persons of whom they were speaking, and when Mrs. Waterford saw Harry

Melville haggard with sleeplessness and excitement, she did not wonder that this new intimacy had surprised Frank. She received the guest, however, with great cordiality, and handed him a seat near the fire, while Herbert placed himself at the table, to read the morning lesson.

The psalm for the day was one with which Harry was well acquainted ; why did it seem to him now so peculiarly full of meaning ? Sunday after Sunday he had heard the familiar words, " Bless the Lord, oh, my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name ; " why then did he feel as if listening to a new revelation concerning the character of the Almighty when he heard the announcement,

" The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, of long suffering, and of great goodness. He will not always be chiding, neither keepeth he his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickednesses. For look how high the heaven is in comparison of the earth ! so great is his mercy also towards them that fear him. Look how wide also the east is from the west ! so far hath he set our sins from us. Yea, like as a father pitieth his children, so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear him. For he knoweth whereof

we are made ; he remembereth that we are but dust."

The tender assurances which this psalm contained of the love and forgiveness of the Almighty, and the child-like confidence with which Herbert approached his heavenly Father, tranquilized the heart of the now truly penitent young man, and he joined in the Lord's Prayer, at the conclusion of the exercises, with deep earnestness and humility.

"Are you fond of children?" asked Herbert, as he saw that his new friend was trying to wile little Fanny to his side, while they were awaiting a summons to breakfast.

"Very much so ; I only wish that they had always been with me," replied Harry, as he placed the little girl on his knee, and put his arm affectionately around her. The young, fair head, with its soft curls, leaning so confidently on his breast, seemed to warm his very heart, and pressing her closer to his side, he wished that it were possible to regain the bliss of child-like innocence.

"Are not your eyes very weak?" asked Fanny, as she looked up inquiringly to the softened countenance of her new friend.

He smiled, as he brushed away the unconscious

tear which had drawn forth the question, and said gently, "Sometimes they are very weak, when I look at dear little children."

Before Fanny could inquire what was meant by this remark, breakfast was announced. When the family were seated at the table, Mrs. Waterford observed, turning to Herbert,

"I have a favor to ask of you to-day, for Frank. Will you allow his holidays to commence this morning? He then will be able to pay a visit to his uncle at Holmwood, and return in time to spend Christmas here."

"Certainly," replied Herbert, with a grateful smile, for he saw that Mrs. Waterford, with womanly tact, had divined that this arrangement would be as much for his convenience as for the pleasure of her son. "I will take him to Holmwood myself this morning," he added; "for it is on the road to the Berkley Tract, where the Browns are living; and I had been for some time anxious to pay them a visit. You will go with us, Harry, will you not?"

"That depends upon who the Browns are, though I am in a mood for doing any thing that you wish this morning," said Harry, looking at the young clergyman with such mingled respect and affection, that Frank inwardly forgave him

for aspiring to the friendship of his beloved preceptor.

“Well then, Frank,” continued Mr. Atherton, “with your mother’s consent, I will then set you down at Holmwood. You must be ready to start at ten o’clock.”

During the ride to Holmwood, Herbert devoted himself to his pupil; but when he had deposited Frank at that place, he seated himself by Harry, and gave him an account of the Browns. He did not, however, mention the midnight visit to the dwelling of Mrs. Waterford, as he had promised that this should remain a secret. His auditor listened with much interest to the narrative, and was curious to learn what had been the result of the philanthropic experiment proposed by Mr. Nugent.

“You must not expect to find that Tom’s reformation is yet perfect,” said Herbert; “for he has much to struggle against, and we can only hope for gradual improvement.”

“I certainly shall not expect an entire change,” replied Harry, with deep humility; “for, after months of effort, I have only just begun to see the depths of my own wickedness.”

“You have taken one very important step towards amendment,” said Herbert, encouraging-



ly, "if you have become fully convinced that your own depravity is fathomless. I hope that this visit to poor Tom will cheer you; for I trust that he will, at least, be able to say that he is happier in struggling for good than yielding to evil."

The spot on which the travellers alighted was a cold, dreary-looking plain. The only habitations visible were a few straggling shanties, rudely built; and these would have seemed deserted were it not for the thin wreaths of smoke which rose from their solitary chimneys.

"One of these must be Tom's," said Herbert, as he directed his steps towards the nearest cabin.

"He must have been in a wretched plight before, if his present abode is an improvement," said Harry, as, shivering, he buttoned his light overcoat more closely over his breast.

On knocking at the door of this humble dwelling, it was opened by a pleasant, tidy-looking woman, whom Mr. Atherton at once recognized as an old acquaintance. As soon as Sally Brown became aware who her visitor was, her face lighted up with joy, and she exclaimed,

"Oh sir, is it you! How good in you to come so far to see us. Walk in! I am so glad you



have come, for I wanted you to know how happy you had made us !”

The apartment into which Herbert and his friend were ushered was the only one that the cabin contained ; but it was perfectly neat and comfortable. The rude bed, in one corner, was covered with sheets of irreproachable whiteness, and the table, in the other, was set for two persons, with a scrupulous regard to order. But the object which attracted the attention of Mr. Atherton was a small pine stand, on which lay a Bible and Prayer-book. Sally saw the direction of his eyes, and said gratefully,

“ Oh ! those blessed books ! What a comfort they have been to us ! Tom reads in them in the morning, before he goes to his work, and at night when he comes home ; and that helps us to get through the week.”

Herbert’s fine eyes sparkled with pleasure at this information.

“ Is Tom at work far from here ?” he asked ; “ for our stay must be short.”

“ Quite a piece, sir,” she replied ; “ but he will be home in a moment to dinner. You must be hungry yourselves, gentlemen, and I hope you’ll share his bit with him.”

Young Melville was rather annoyed at this in-

vation; for dining with a burglar in such a shanty was a new sort of entertainment, not quite adapted to please his fastidious taste; but Herbert answered cordially,

“To be sure we will. That piece of bacon which I see thumping against the kettle cover, as it boils, will be very acceptable after our cold ride.”

“There he comes!” exclaimed Sally, as she rushed out of the house to announce to her husband the joyful intelligence of Mr. Atherton’s visit.

Herbert was well aware of the effect of expression upon the human countenance; but still he was not prepared for the manifest improvement in the whole appearance of Tom Brown. His brutal ferocity of manner had entirely disappeared, leaving only an air of manly independence; and his voice was even gentle in its tone, as he said with much emotion,

“I cannot tell you what I feel at seeing you. Only remember what we were when you first knew us, and you can imagine how grateful we ought to be to God and to you, sir. Every morsel of bread is sweeter from knowing that it is honestly earned.”

“The gentlemen, perhaps, will taste some of it

now," said Sally, as she put the smoking potatoes and bacon upon the table, and placed two wooden chairs for the guests.

Harry declined the invitation, but it was not pride which now prevented its acceptance. His heart had been too much touched by the sight of Brown and his gratitude, for him to remember that there was any social distinction between them.

"Don't mind Mr. Melville," said Herbert pleasantly. "He is used to late dinners, and will find his own ready when we return to town. Sit down, Tom, for I know that you have not long to spare."

"Will you ask a blessing, sir," said Tom respectfully, before seating himself in the vacant chair opposite to the young clergyman.

Herbert complied instantly with this request, and added a few words of thanksgiving to Him who had called these, his children, out of darkness into light, commending them for the future to his never-failing guidance and protection.

Tom could not help remembering the time when he had first heard that voice in prayer, and was overcome by a deep sense of the mercy of God in having thus saved him from destruction.

"Is there any church near you?" asked Mr. Atherton, when Sally had dried up the tears in which her agitated feelings had at length found relief.

"Yes, sir," she said; "only about two miles off, and we always go to it on Sunday. The minister has been to see us several times, and he talks so plain that we can understand every word that he says."

"And is it always easy to do right now, Tom?" asked Herbert, more for the benefit of his friend than for his own information.

Tom sighed deeply as he answered,

"Oh no! Doing right will always be uphill work for me, I fear; but it gets something easier, and I am so busy at work now that I don't have much time to get into mischief. Then my old woman here is so happy, that I really can't have the heart to do any thing to vex her. She's picked up wonderfully, hasn't she? A faithful wife Sally's been to me."

This heartfelt testimony to her own worth made Sally apply the corner of her apron to her eyes again; but Mr. Atherton diverted her thoughts by taking from his pocket a package that contained a number of excellent tracts, and some nice warm stockings, which were a present

from Mrs. Waterford. As he did so, the whistle of the locomotive was heard in the distance, and with a kind farewell to their humble friends, the gentlemen hurried to the cars.

While returning to the city, Herbert and his companion preserved an almost unbroken silence. The latter was reflecting deeply upon the scene they had left, and the purifying effects of Christianity. During the last night his whole life had passed in review before him, and he was overwhelmed by the conviction that most of his sins had inflicted even more injury upon others than upon himself. To how many of his fellow-beings who were now beyond the reach of his influence, had he given the first impulse in that downward course which had ended in their perdition? Fearful thought! No wonder that it blanched his cheek with horror.

“And this man,” he said to himself, “has been imprisoned for two years, for a crime, lighter perhaps in the sight of his Maker, than those which I daily committed! And I who am stained with the blood of souls, walk at large in the very society for whose good he was condemned to punishment. True, he violated human law, and therefore rightly suffered its penalty; but surely, in another world, God will visit with heavier dis



pleasure those sins for which there is here no retribution. Poor Mary Harris! I wish she would not haunt me thus, reproaching me as her destroyer. It is a wonder that I have not been cut off in the midst of my sins. Blessed be God that he 'hath not rewarded me according to my wickedness.' "

Herbert's reflections were of a brighter character. Since the perusal of Miss Cameron's letter, he had been so much engrossed in Harry, that he had not been able to dwell upon its contents; but now, he abandoned himself to the delightful thought that his beloved Agnes was not only a Christian, but free in heart and hand. Yet, how could he become a suitor for the latter, when in no situation to provide for the comfort of another? For the first time, he wished that he were settled in a permanent home, and in receipt of a salary adequate to the maintenance of a family. But this thought hardly overshadowed his joy, for he felt assured that if Providence intended that his earthly pilgrimage should be cheered by her society, all obstacles to their union would be removed. Besides, it would be useless to suffer any annoyance on this account, when it was entirely uncertain whether Agnes ever had felt, or ever would feel for him that degree of affection



which she believed to be indispensable to the happiness of any marriage.

Herbert had learned from long experience, that it is impossible to ponder upon the possible issue of future events, without becoming involved in anxiety and sadness, and that the insecurity of all earthly happiness makes its anticipation, sometimes, almost a pain. He therefore banished from his mind all questionings as to what might be his earthly lot, and passed in thought to that only future upon which the soul can repose in full security. It was sweeter to him, to dwell on an eternity of love in the presence of his blessed Saviour, than to think of a few fleeting years of checkered joy and sorrow, terminating, at last, in death.

As these two young men, so near in age, and so equal in intellectual advantages, thus sat side by side, absorbed in meditation, their countenances might have seemed as indexes to their varied trains of thought. Harry's face was as dark and as changeful as the sky when the clouds of a late storm are drifting over it, while on Herbert's calm brow there dwelt the untroubled serenity of heaven's own azure depths. But, as time passed on, Harry's countenance brightened, and one might almost see "the tempest passing

by, as evening shadows quickly fly," and hope that the hour was near when his heart, too, would be filled with tranquillity and contentment.

"Is it possible we are here?" he asked, as the cars entered the depot. "What a short ride! We must part now, Mr. Atherton, for I have already trespassed too long upon your society, and I hope that for a time, at least, I shall be safe in my own. There is much evil that may yet be undone, and life is too short for me to waste another moment. I shall come and see you again as soon as I can, and in the mean time pray for me."

A silent pressure of the hand was Mr. Atherton's only reply; but he followed the retreating form of the young man with a glance of deep interest and affection; and then, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, he directed his own steps towards the hospitable dwelling of Mrs. Waterford, which was to him the most delightful of homes.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE WIDOW'S SON.

"If I had not lived for thee,  
Thou hadst died most wretchedly."—HERBERT.

IN approaching the village of Holmwood, Herbert had been attracted by the appearance of an edifice which Frank had informed him was the new Episcopal church. It was a Gothic structure, built of rough stone, in the early English style; and though simple and comparatively unexpensive, it was capacious and substantial. The rectory adjoining displayed the same union of judgment and taste; and both buildings were surrounded by beautiful evergreens, which gave them, even in the depth of winter, a cheerful and attractive aspect.

The congregation for whose use this edifice had been erected, was chiefly composed of persons who were employed in the neighboring manufactories, or engaged in agricultural pursuits. There were, however, a few gentlemen belonging to the parish who occupied the adja-

cent country-seats, but transacted business in the city, which was only a few miles distant. Among these gentlemen Mr. James Waterford was alike conspicuous for the soundness of his churchmanship and the fervor of his piety. To him had been intrusted the supervision of the new church, which owed much to his cultivated taste and liberal contributions. There now devolved upon him the still more arduous task of selecting a rector, though the responsibility was nominally shared by the three other members of the committee appointed for that purpose.

In order to judge of the intellectual capacity of different clergymen, Mr. Waterford had recently spent several Sundays in town, and on one of these he attended service at the Chapel of St. Barnabas. The discourse to which he listened seemed to his critical ear to evince more piety than talent; and though much pleased with the appearance and manner of the young clergyman, he decided in his own mind that he had not sufficient force of intellect to build up a new parish. He imparted his views on this subject to his sister-in-law, Mrs. George Waterford, who was somewhat piqued at having her favorite thus undervalued, though very averse to the idea of his being called away from the city. When

Frank went to visit his uncle, he carried him a volume of sermons, one of which had been written by the Rev. Herbert Atherton. Mr. Waterford smiled at the determination of his sister to make him a convert to her own opinion, but read the sermon with candid attention, and was struck with the transparency of style, beauty of illustration, and vigor of thought which it displayed. He remembered then that the discourse to which he had listened was adapted to men who were little above children in capacity, and was somewhat mortified at having, under such circumstances, passed so decisive an opinion with regard to the abilities of the preacher.

When Frank returned home, his uncle accompanied him, and after paying a long visit to the bishop of that diocese, Mr. Waterford requested a private interview with Mr. Atherton. The latter was much surprised at the offer of the rectorship of the Church of the Messiah, at Holmwood, and such was his interest in the congregation of the Chapel of St. Barnabas, that he felt inclined at once to give a decisive negative to the proposal. He remembered, after a moment's reflection, that so important a step should not be taken without due consideration, and therefore consented to postpone his answer till the 1st of



March. He also made many inquiries with regard to the state of the parish, and particularly desired to know whether it contained many persons upon whom the rector might rely for co-operation and sympathy. Mr. Waterford assured him that the members of the vestry, though some of them were deficient in education, were all excellent men, who were zealous for the glory of God, and in promoting the highest welfare of his Church. He also begged Mr. Atherton, with whom he was becoming every instant more pleased, that he would pay him a visit, and judge for himself if the situation of which his acceptance was so warmly urged was not one in which he would not be useful and happy. Herbert readily consented to visit Holmwood at his earliest convenience, and thought that if there were many persons there who equalled Mr. Waterford in acquaintance with Bible truth, and thorough knowledge of church affairs, the position would indeed be most desirable.

And yet, thought the spiritually-minded clergyman, after the departure of Mr. Waterford, the place in which a minister is most comfortable, is that in which he is really least needed. Where the church-officers are all men of high-toned piety, the congregation by whom they are

elected, must be of the same stamp, and all ministrations are blessed to those prayerfully anxious for improvement. Ought I to select a field of such comparatively easy labor? It is a most encouraging work to "strengthen those who stand," but I feel as if it were my appointed mission to comfort and help the weak-hearted, and to raise up those who are fallen.

These meditations were interrupted by the receipt of a note from Harry Melville, who entreated his friend to come immediately to a hotel, which he specified, and see a young man who was very ill. "He asked, a few minutes since, for a clergyman," wrote Harry, "and has now his reason, but it may leave him any moment; and if so, the physician says there is no hope. Come at once."

Herbert did not delay an instant, but hurried to the hotel and inquired for Mr. Barlow's rooms. As he approached the door of the apartment to which he was directed, a piercing shriek met his ear, followed by a succession of low wails of agony. On entering the room, he saw Harry holding down, by main force, a slender young man, who in a perfect state of phrensy was trying to spring from his bed.

"How long has he been thus?" asked Her-

bert, in a low tone, as he softly approached the couch.

Harry started at the sound of Herbert's voice, and exclaimed in bitter agony, "You are too late! His mind has gone. I have destroyed him."

Before any reply could be made to this remorseful assertion, the wretched victim of self-indulgence made a sudden spring, and throwing Harry aside, as if he had been a child, bounded with a fearful scream towards the half-open door. Two men, who had been attracted to the spot by his cries, now burst into the room and aided in securing the unfortunate young man, and after binding him fast, they placed him again upon the couch. There he lay for some moments in a state of perfect exhaustion, and then commenced a terrible struggle for freedom. Suddenly this ceased, and a ray of reason for an instant illumined his wild eyes. He fixed them steadily on Harry, who was leaning over him in breathless anxiety, and said, in a calm, sepulchral tone, "Do you gloat over your work? You first tempted me to drink: you have been my ruin." Then he uttered another frightful yell, and rolling his eyes wildly around, screamed out, "Vipers! snakes! scorpions! They

spring on me. They hiss at me. They sting me!"

At these fearful cries, Harry's face became perfectly colorless, and he would have fallen to the floor, if it had not been for the timely support of Herbert's arm.

"Stay here for a moment," said the latter to the strangers who had come in to their assistance. "My friend must breathe the air."

"No, no!" said Harry, with returning strength; "I must not leave him. Let me do all that I can for him now."

"But, Harry, you are not strong enough to be of any use, and another person will do just as well. Has he no friends in the city for whom we can send?"

"I must stay myself," said Harry firmly. "It is my just punishment. Ralph is a stranger here, and he has no near relations in the world but his mother. We telegraphed to her this noon, and she must arrive very soon."

A moment after there was a gentle tap at the door, and then a light step tottered across the floor, and the slender form of an elderly female, dressed in deep mourning, knelt beside that couch of suffering. She was a widow, and he was her only son.

"Can the world of torment be worse than this!" exclaimed Harry, as he listened to the heart-broken sobs of the wretched mother. "Speak to her, Herbert, or she will die."

He did not speak to her, for her grief was too mighty for human consolation; but, following an involuntary impulse, he threw himself on his knees at her side, and poured out so fervent a petition for divine aid, that even the frantic sufferer remained quiet till its conclusion. Then the widow arose, and, putting her arm round the neck of her son, laid her face softly to his, as if he had been a sick child.

The gentle touch seemed to rouse him to half consciousness, for he fixed his dark eyes mournfully upon her sad face, and, lifting up his fettered hand, patted her thin cheek tenderly, and said in a gentle tone, "You are sorry, mother, I know. Don't grieve for me. You did your duty."

In another instant the lucid interval was past, and, with a loud scream of agony, he burst the fetters from his hands, and aimed a blow at Herbert, who was standing at his side. It did not injure him, but another stroke sent Harry reeling to the ground. He rose, however, unhurt, and, assisted by the two strangers, succeeded in again securing the arms of the now raving maniac.



The soul-stricken mother now became fearfully calm.

"Will you go to the nearest physician?" she said to one of the men who stood gazing on the scene with deep sympathy. "He must be bled instantly. And you, sir," she added, turning to Harry, "had better leave us now. You are very pale, and these two gentlemen will be able to take care of the poor boy."

"Go, Harry," said Herbert. "You can be of no use to him here, but you can pray for him elsewhere; and if there is the least improvement, you shall be sent for instantly. Go, I beseech you."

With a despairing look, Harry at last consented to withdraw, and then Mrs. Barlow asked for the particulars of her son's illness. Herbert could give her no information; but on the arrival of the physician, she learned that only the day before the poor fellow was in perfect health.

He was so furious now that it was almost impossible to bleed him; but after the operation was performed, he grew more quiet.

"He is better," said the mother an hour afterwards, when she saw that her son was perfectly tranquil.

The physician shook his head, and felt the

pulse of his patient with an expression of deep concern.

"Is he going?" whispered Herbert.

"Failing rapidly," was the brief reply.

"May he not have his senses? There is intelligence in his eye," said Herbert, as he watched the now pallid face of the invalid with fearful interest.

"It is possible, but not probable," said the physician. "He cannot last more than an hour."

Herbert did not wait for another word, but approached the bedside very gently, and fixing his eyes on the sufferer, repeated in a low tone the fifty-first Psalm. Was he mistaken in supposing that Ralph moved his lips, as if following him? With still deeper solemnity he now recited the history of the penitent thief, adding, from a memory richly stored with the promises of God, all such as were most encouraging and abundant in mercy. As he did so, the eyes of the dying man fixed upon him with the most intense and mournful earnestness, and a tear stole out upon his pallid cheek.

"He understands what you say, perfectly," exclaimed the agonized mother. "Oh, pray with him!"

There was a fearful stillness in that chamber,

while the clergyman offered a prayer which has ushered many a soul into eternity :

“ O most gracious Father, we fly unto thee for mercy in behalf of this thy servant, here lying under the sudden visitation of thine hand. If it be thy will, preserve his life, that there may be place for repentance ; but if thou hast otherwise appointed, let thy mercy supply to him the want of the usual opportunity for the trimming of his lamp. Stir up in him such sorrow for sin, and such fervent love to thee, as may in a short time do the work of many days : that among the praises which thy saints and holy angels shall sing to the honor of thy mercy through eternal ages, it may be to thy unspeakable glory that thou hast redeemed the soul of this thy servant from eternal death, and made him partaker of the everlasting life, which is through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Before the prayer was ended, a spirit had passed into the hands of its Creator.

“ Leave me,” said the childless widow ; “ I must be alone with God.”

An hour afterwards, Herbert came softly to the door and asked admittance. Mrs. Barlow opened it, calmly ; but he started at the change which that brief space had wrought upon her

whole appearance, and could with difficulty command himself enough to explain the reason of his intrusion. At length he said, in a broken voice,

"Would you like some female friend with you to-night? An excellent lady, Mrs. Waterford, will come and stay with you here; or if you prefer it, Ralph can be removed to her dwelling."

"No," she replied, with an unfaltering voice; "let him remain here till he is carried to his last resting-place. I should like the company of Mrs. Waterford for a little while; but if possible, will you make arrangements for carrying my poor boy home to-night?"

Herbert withdrew instantly, and drove rapidly to Mrs. Waterford's dwelling, accompanied by Harry Melville, whose very reason seemed tottering with mental agony. "He came here but six months since," he said, "a bright, happy boy. I tempted him to drink wine and brandy, laughed at his scruples, introduced him to a gambling-house, persuaded him that Christians were hypocrites, and did all in my power to destroy his soul. How can I hope to be forgiven?"

"But God, in his mercy, may have saved you from this awful guilt," said his companion,

soothingly. "We know not in how short a time a soul may find mercy, and from the expression of Ralph's dying countenance, I am full of hope that he fled in his extremity to the only refuge of sinners."

"You really think this possible!" exclaimed Harry, as eagerly as a drowning man would snatch at the means of rescue. "But no! an offended God cannot thus easily be pacified," he added, mournfully.

"There is no limit to his mercy, when sought in the name, and for the sake, of our blessed Saviour," said Herbert, solemnly. "I know that there are those who think that evil may ensue from making a death-bed repentance seem a probability; but you, Harry, are in no danger of being encouraged to lead a life of sin by such a hope. You have learned by bitter experience that to defer repentance is to heap up sorrow for yourself, and woe for others."

"I have, indeed!" replied Harry sadly. "I would begin life a pauper, and spend it all in suffering, to efface the irreparable injury that I have done. No, no, repentance cannot undo the past. Poor Ralph! He is not my only victim. There is another: she sleeps now with her baby upon her breast; but she will rise up in



the judgment-day to witness against her destroyer."

"It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?" said Herbert, gently.

Mrs. Waterford returned immediately with Mr. Atherton to the hotel; but he would not allow Harry to accompany them. "You can do Mrs. Barlow no good," he said, "and the lesson you have received is already sufficiently severe. Go home, my poor friend, and do not allow yourself to doubt that the blood of Christ can wash out sins even as dark as that which is filling your soul with agony. I will come to you in the morning. To-night, I shall accompany Mrs. Barlow upon her mournful journey."

"If she knows what I have done," said Harry, gasping for breath, "she can never forgive me. Tell her, though, how bitterly I repent of my evil influence, and find out if there is any way in which I can serve her. Do come to me as soon as you return."

"What a noble heart Satan obtained for a prey, when Harry fell a victim to his arts!" said Herbert, sadly, as his poor friend turned away, bowed down by remorse. "I hope that he has broken the fetters of sin; but he will wear their mark till his dying day. But oh! if he

had been reared according to the promises made at his baptism, how different might have been his life ! But he was dedicated to God, and then given to the world."

"How I tremble," said Mrs. Waterford, "when I think of the temptations to which Frank will be exposed !"

"I do not wonder that you feel the deepest anxiety for him," said Herbert ; "but you must not distrust the promises of God. I know that you will give your son not only religious knowledge, but earnest prayers and a consistent example, and you have striven from his infancy to keep him unspotted from the world."

"But perhaps Mrs. Barlow did the same by her poor boy !" said Mrs. Waterford, with a deep sigh. "When I see such instances of fruitless prayer and faith, my heart dies within me."

"And how do you know that in this case prayer and faith were vain ? Who can tell what passed in the heart of that young man in his dying hour ? I could much more easily believe that he then made his peace with his Maker, than that one jot or tittle of the promises of God should fail."

On again entering the chamber of death, Mr. Atherton found the mother still more composed.

"Come here," she said, "and look at his face. Do you see its tranquil peace? His earthly frame could not wear so serene an appearance if his spirit were now in misery. I cannot but hope that in his dying hour my prayers were heard."

"And God has given you that hope to rest upon, my dear madam," said Herbert, with affectionate sympathy. "I firmly believe that the last day will reveal many instances of such unspeakable mercy. Here is Mrs. Waterford. Like yourself, she has known much sorrow. We can leave here in two hours, and I beg that you will allow me to accompany you."

"You are very kind," said the afflicted mother, gratefully.

"I am only doing my Master's work," replied Herbert, meekly.

At twelve o'clock that night the earthly remains of Ralph Barlow reached that home which he had left a few months before in the pride of youth and health.

Herbert could not restrain his tears as he saw the deep grief of the servants at the loss of their beloved young master, and the melancholy loneliness of their childless mistress. But the faith and hope of a Christian subdued the anguish of the mother's heart; and as she stood by the corpse

of her only son, surrounded by weeping friends and domestics, she exclaimed, with pious resignation,

“‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.’”

## CHAPTER XI.

## AN INVALID, AND A VOYAGE.

“His heart is sick with thinking  
Of the misery of his kind ;  
His mind is almost sinking—  
That once so buoyant mind.”

THE sympathy which is most precious to the recipient is always most costly to its giver. For six months Herbert Atherton had been drawing perpetually upon his own warm heart for the consolation of others ; and though the fountain was inexhaustible, his physical constitution was too delicate to endure such continued excitement. His mind dwelt day and night with feverish activity upon the woes of his fellow-men, and was constantly busy in devising schemes for their relief ; but he was at times seized with an irresistible depression, which was the consequence of nervous debility.

Mrs. Waterford noticed, with truly maternal anxiety, that her young friend was becoming paler and thinner, and tried in vain to tempt his fast failing appetite.



At length Herbert was obliged to own that he was really ill, and, to please Mrs. Waterford, he consented to consult her family physician.

Dr. Warner saw at a glance what was the state of the case, and had too often met the young clergyman on his errands of mercy to be surprised at his present condition.

"Your preaching may be very good, my dear sir, but I call this a decided case of mal-practice," he said kindly, as he felt the quick, thread-like pulse of his patient.

"Why, what do you think ails me, doctor?" asked Herbert languidly, and with much less interest than he would have evinced with regard to a stranger.

"What do I think ails you?" repeated the physician. "Why, you have been wearing your heart-strings out. Don't you believe that the sixth commandment was meant to forbid one's killing himself. If you do, what have you been about all this while but committing suicide?"

"But what else could I do?" said Herbert apologetically. "How could I remain at home when the sick and the suffering needed my advice?"

"Tut! tut! you are always hunting up such people. Now tell me frankly whether you want

to live or not?" said the blunt but kind-hearted doctor.

"I wish to live as long as my Master has work for me to accomplish here, and no longer," said Herbert soberly.

"Well, then, will you do what I tell you?" asked Dr. Warner.

"Certainly I will, if you think that I am in any danger," replied Herbert.

"In danger! why, you'll be off into a galloping consumption in six weeks, at this rate. In the first place, you must give up the Chapel of St. Barnabas, which is no place for a man of such fine sensibilities and intense sympathies as you possess."

"And who will take care of my poor people?" asked Herbert mournfully.

"Somebody that's much better fitted for the place than you are, I'll be bound. You think about those scapegraces, and try to realize their condition, till you feel all the while as if you had been stealing and murdering, and were on the brink of destruction. Then you stand up there and preach yourself into a perfect glow, and come out in the cold air just in a state to plant the seeds of consumption. Some morning you will be sending to tell me that you have had a

hemorrhage from the lungs, and then it will be all over with you."

"But even were I in as bad a way as you make out, Doctor, if I were convinced that I am more useful in my present position than any one else could be, I am not sure that I should give it up," said Herbert. "The Apostle, you know, counted not life itself dear, so that he might finish his course with joy, and I would readily yield up mine, if the souls of others demanded the sacrifice."

"Very bad doctrine indeed," said the physician impatiently. "Your first duty is to keep the commandments of God; and they tell you to murder no man, yourself not excepted. But I am not sure that giving up your charge alone will save you. Now you have put yourself in this fix, you must take some pains to get out of it. Is there no little journey that you would like to take? A short voyage would be the thing."

Herbert thought for a few moments, and then his face beamed with pleasure, as he asked with some hesitation,

"What do you think of a trip to Savannah?"

"Just the thing!" responded Dr. Warner, rubbing his hands, "for I see that there is more rea-

son why such an excursion would divert your thoughts. Pack up, and be off instantly."

"But I have an important matter to decide before I can go," interposed Herbert.

"Psha! Your decision now wouldn't be worth a straw. Make the contracting party wait till you return, which you will do in a month or two, I prophesy, with a healthier color, and twenty pounds more of flesh."

When Mrs. Waterford heard what was the advice of Dr. Warner, she became most anxious for the departure of her friend, and even offered to accompany him upon his voyage, if he felt too ill to undertake it alone.

Herbert would not consent to her making such a sacrifice, but put her mind at ease by promising to try and arrange his affairs so that he might leave during the ensuing week. He then wrote a letter to Mr. James Waterford, regretting that the state of his health would at present prevent him from giving a decisive answer to the proposal of the committee of the church at Holmwood, and leaving it to their option whether the rectorship should continue at his refusal.

To this letter he received a most courteous reply, assuring him that no steps would be taken during his absence to procure a substitute, and

suggesting that the state of his health might be an additional inducement to leave the city, and take charge of a country parish.

“And what will you do with Frank?” he asked anxiously of Mrs. Waterford. “If I go to Holmwood on my return, I shall be obliged to give him up, so perhaps you had better procure some person capable of carrying on his instruction till he is ready to enter college.”

“I have another plan for Frank,” said Mrs. Waterford archly. “In your absence, I shall teach him myself, and when you return I intend to place him under your charge at the Holmwood rectory. Perhaps you can find some lady at the South who will come back with you to take a motherly care of my dear boy in your new home.”

It was the first time that Mrs. Waterford had given any intimation that she suspected the reason why Mr. Atherton preferred visiting Savannah to any other place.

He was evidently embarrassed by her last remark, but he mastered his confusion, and, sitting down by her, said affectionately,

“You should have known before, my kind friend, all that concerned my dearest earthly interests, could you have done so without my betraying the confidence of another. Agnes Came-



ron is now all that my heart could wish, and a month since was free to bestow her hand on any one fortunate enough to win her affection. I have made no effort since to secure her love, because I was not sufficiently independent to do so with honor. If I am well enough to take charge of the Holmwood parish, there will be no obstacle to my asking if she will consent to preside over its rectory."

Mrs. Waterford's congratulations were most sincere, though marriage was a subject of which she could never speak without tears ; and as she looked at the noble face of the young clergyman, it seemed to her impossible that he could ever sue in vain for the favor of any woman of taste and discernment.

When Herbert called upon the Bishop of the diocese to inform him that he was constrained by illness to resign the charge of the Chapel of St. Barnabas, he found that that reverend father in God was already aware of the fact.

"I have feared for some time," said the latter, "that your strength would not keep pace with your energy and zeal, and it was upon this account that I was in favor of your removal to Holmwood. I love your ardor, my dear young brother ; but you may accomplish much more by

a long life of judicious exertion than by a short one of such incessant labor."

"I think, sir, that my friends are mistaken with regard to my indisposition," said Herbert, respectfully. "They substitute causes for effects. My constitution was always delicate, and I have never looked forward to length of days, and on this very account have felt greater anxiety to do something more for the glory of God. You may remember that I left my last parish on account of my health, and was very ill after my arrival here, so that it does not seem to me reasonable to attribute my present weakness to any imprudence on my own part."

"But I have heard," said the Bishop, mildly, "that your first illness was in consequence of over-exertion ; and I cannot think that you are right in risking a life which is so valuable to the Church."

"But," said Herbert, "I have always given myself sufficient time for exercise and relaxation, and such a variety in my employments as might prevent their being laborious. I have written but one sermon weekly since I have been in this city, and, excepting the instruction of Frank Waterford, my other duties have been almost all of a pastoral nature."

"But those are the very ones which have sapped your strength. Far be it from me to check your zeal, my dear young friend, but I cannot endure the thought of so valuable a life being so lightly sacrificed."

"And what can I do?" asked Herbert earnestly. "My ordination vows are upon me, to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole, within my cure, as need shall require and occasion be given. How then can I neglect any opportunity of benefiting the souls for whom I must give an account, or refrain from carrying from house to house the glad tidings of salvation? Oh sir, it is not over-exertion that is preying upon my strength, but the sight of misery which I cannot relieve, of sin which will not seek for forgiveness. My own heart is at peace with my Maker; but I have such a burning desire to reconcile others to him, that sometimes my days and nights are one long intercessory prayer; and nothing on earth seems of any importance but the one question, how I may win souls to Christ."

Tears filled the eyes of the venerable Bishop at this burst of religious fervor, and for a moment his feelings could find no utterance.

"You have the true spirit of a Christian minis-

ter, my son," he said at last. "Such, too, are my own feelings, and those of many of the ambassadors of God, whose trials are little comprehended by the world. It is this fearful sense of responsibility that saps the strength and shortens the lives of so many of our brethren; but we cannot feel otherwise, and be fitted for our sacred office. May God restore you to health, and adorn your heavenly crown with many of those jewels which are so precious in his sight."

The last visit which Herbert paid before his departure, was to Harry Melville at his office. He found him occupied in renewing his legal studies; for, while nominally practising his profession, the idle young man had actually forgotten the first principles of law.

"I am surprised to find how much I have forgotten, and how sadly my mind has been weakened by the excesses in which I have indulged," he remarked sorrowfully. "When shall I finish the discovery of the evils which I have brought upon myself by my own wickedness? But the recompense is just; I only reap what I have sown."

"But, my dear friend," said Herbert in a cheerful tone, "you will also reap the better seed that you are now sowing in tears. I hope to see you at no distant day rejoicing over a plentiful

harvest of good. On my return, I am sure that I shall find you a happier man. Write to me very often, and tell me all that you think and feel."

"May I ask you one question?" said Harry, hesitatingly. "Do not answer it if you dislike to do so. Are you not going to pay your addresses to Miss Cameron?"

Herbert looked at his friend with affectionate sympathy as he answered frankly, "If my health is restored, so that I have a prospect of life and usefulness, I shall tell her the story of my hitherto hopeless affection."

At this information, there was an evident struggle in the mind of his companion; but his better feelings conquered, and, extending his hand to Herbert, he said warmly,

"You are worthy of her, and I wish you success with all my heart. Tell her that if I had known as much of my own sinfulness when I last wrote to her, as I now do, I should have never insulted her by a proposal that she should link her life to one so sullied with crime. Yet endeavor to persuade her, my dear friend, that I am now trying in earnest to reform, and think of me yourself as kindly as you can."

Herbert acceded to these requests with assu-



rances of the warmest interest and affection ; for he felt in parting with Harry—he felt that in spite of all his errors, his repentant friend was becoming very dear to him.

“ And now, my dear Mrs. Waterford,” he said on his return home, “ it only remains for me to thank you for your never-failing kindness, and to ask that you would inform Dr. Welford of the cause of my absence, and say how much I regretted that he happened to be away, so that I could not bid him farewell. It is true that Dr. Warner flatters me that I may return in two months ; but I never presume upon probabilities. You can never estimate the value to me of your affectionate interest and sympathy. I place these gifts before more substantial benefits, because the heart is always more truly grateful for affection than actual beneficence. You have been to me a second mother, and as such I shall reverence and love you as long as life lasts.”

“ And that will be for many years, I trust, my dear Herbert,” she replied, cheerfully. “ I look forward with confidence to your return, and should any friend accompany you, remember that this is your home.”

Herbert understood the invitation, and smiled, though somewhat sadly.

"The future is so uncertain," he said, "that I hardly dare let my mind rest upon such a possibility. If I can only see Agnes once more, and hear from her own lips, one assurance of her faith in a brighter world, I can die content; and even now, am prepared to take my leave of existence without a pang."

"I ought not to wish that you should live, Herbert," said his friend, as she brushed away a tear, "for you are ready for heaven, and I know that it is a happier home than this sorrowful earth; but oh, the heart so clings to its idols! I cannot let you go."

"You are not now called upon to give me up only for a season," he said gently, "and therefore you have not the requisite strength. Your face grows brighter at that thought, and you feel that you can endure a long absence if it is not final. Why then dread that separation which can only last during the brief continuance of our mortal lives?"

"I know that it is wrong and unchristian to feel thus," she replied; "but the more friends I lose, the more fondly I cling to those that remain."

"Ah, here come my little pets!" exclaimed Herbert, as the children entered, accompanied

by Frank, who was inconsolable at the idea of losing Mr. Atherton.

Mrs. Waterford tried to welcome them with a smile, for she did not wish their young hearts to be saddened; but it was some minutes before she could speak cheerfully.

"I shall expect weekly letters from you, Frank, and you must tell me every thing that you see or hear which interests you. If your mother has no objections, you can go on board the steamer with me this noon, and then you can tell her all about my state-room, and who are my fellow-passengers."

At this proposal, Frank's face brightened, and Mrs. Waterford readily acceded to it, for she knew that Herbert would take the opportunity to give her son such advice as he most needed.

But with all the efforts that were made to be cheerful, the parting was still a sad one, and when Herbert bade Mrs. Waterford "Good-bye," with an earnest "God bless you," she burst into tears and exclaimed,

"Come back to me, my son—I cannot part with you forever."

He had only time to say, soothingly, "No, my dearest madam, we shall not, I trust, at all events

part forever. In this world or a brighter, I feel that we shall meet again," and then he was borne rapidly away from one of the kindest and best of friends.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CONVALESCENCE.

"Slacken not sail yet,  
At inlet or island ;  
Straight for the beacon steer,  
Straight for the highland."

"MOTHER, here's a letter from Mr. Atherton," said Frank, as he bounded into Mrs. Waterford's room, his face glowing with pleasure.

"Indeed!" she exclaimed, looking equally delighted, as she broke the seal and read the following epistle:

"SAVANNAH, March 1st.

"I have been sitting at my desk for an hour, my dear friend, trying to find words in which to express my present feelings. The attempt is vain, and I can only say that I am happier than I ever expected to be till I reached the world of everlasting bliss.

"How can I describe my Agnes? I thought her lovely before, but Christian grace now gives to her every act an added charm. The enthusiastic warmth of her nature entirely pervades her religious character; and where others would be actuated by a sense of duty, she but follows a spontaneous impulse of love. I am constantly fearful lest I



should betray such admiration as to mar the sweet unconsciousness which is her crowning grace. While imparting to her every other thought and feeling, it is difficult to withhold from her knowledge the fact that I consider her as the most perfect of created beings; and I am constantly in danger of injuring the dear object of my love by ill-judged expressions of devotion.

"You wonder, perhaps, at my warmth, and are surprised at my being so ardent a lover; but it was the consciousness of my own tendency to idolatrous affection which made me think that I should never be permitted on earth to enjoy such blissful interchange of heart. I tremble now at my own happiness, and endeavor to look away from it, lest my mind should become absorbed in that which must pass away. And yet, the purest element of our love is that which cannot perish,—an intense sympathy in our Christian hopes and aspirations, and a joyful anticipation of that blessed time when our union shall be perfected in the presence of our Redeemer and Lord.

"You may be surprised that we have so rapidly attained such entire oneness in heart and soul; but I found that on Agnes' part, as well as my own, affection had been the growth of years. On my first arrival, her manner was so cordial that it gave me reason to hope that her favor might in time be won; and as soon as I avowed my own feelings, she owned that before we parted, her regard for me had exceeded that which she had ever felt for any human being. I am obliged constantly to suppress the vanity engendered by finding myself so highly esteemed; and I am trying to convince Agnes that her imagination has invested me with qualities that I do not possess, lest she should be bitterly disappointed when the constant intercourse of daily life reveals the faults to which, in our present circumstances, I feel no temptation.

"Excuse me for writing so egotistically, but you made me promise, my dear friend, to consider you as a mother, and

to her who bore that name my heart was always revealed. It is needless for me to say that my health is improving, for how could the body fail to participate in the well-being of its spiritual companion. The voyage was in itself beneficial, and daily rides on horseback, in the sweetest of all society, have had a most invigorating effect on my health and spirits. I am really so much better, that it seems hardly necessary that I should remain here as long as Dr. Warner recommended; but other circumstances have induced me to delay my return until May.

“After much serious thought and frequent consultations with Agnes, I have determined to accept the Rectorship of Christ Church, Holmwood, and shall write to Mr. Waterford to-morrow, to that effect. Were it possible, I should prefer to retain the chapel of St. Barnabas; but the hand of Providence seems to indicate that I should take charge of a parish less gratifying to my own personal feelings. But there is one reason why the retirement of the country is to us at present peculiarly desirable. Agnes was, you know, for several years excessively gay and devoted to the pomps and follies of fashionable life. Although she has now learned to look upon these things in their true aspect, she dreads to encounter the temptations which were once so formidable. I cannot but believe that she underrates her own strength, but still I should be very unwilling to place her in so trying a position as that of a clergyman’s wife in a large city. It would need much moral courage in the midst of gay and thoughtless acquaintances, to set an example of such Christian plainness and simplicity of life, as we both believe to be necessary in such a situation.

“I am much pleased to hear that Mr. Arnold is preaching at St. Barnabas’: he is a man for whose piety I have the highest respect, and his manners are so winning, that I am sure he will fix the attention and win the affection of many of his hearers. Tell Frank that he must be ready to remove to Holmwood early in June, and be

diligent in his studies that he may honor his present instructress.

"I most sincerely hope that my poor friend Harry Melville comes often to see you. If he does not, please send for him. The sense of his own unworthiness makes him diffident of the good-will of others, and I am sure that your society will do him good. The more I see of Agnes, the deeper is my sympathy in his disappointment. She says, that in his most thoughtless days, he always manifested the same candor and warmth of heart.

"I feel as if I had told you nothing that I wished. No sorrow has ever made self-command so difficult as this unlooked-for joy. I am thrown so entirely off my guard that every avenue to temptation seems open. No wonder that, in the Litany, the time of our prosperity is ranked with those solemn periods of existence when we have most reason to say, 'Good Lord, deliver us.' Such is the perpetual prayer of my heart as I feel those tendrils turning earthward which have, hitherto, been seeking a divine support. So fearful am I becoming of the temptations of this life, that I almost wish to leave it now, and await in a better land the fulfilment of those wishes which here are so dangerous to the peace of my soul. You, my dear friend, who have felt the stunning effects of a separation from a being you so tenderly loved, will not wonder that on this my 'harvest crown of happiness there should be something like a tear.' You, I am sure, would never tell me to lay these fears aside, and give myself wholly up to the present, but would rather quote the words of the Apostle, and entreat me with heartfelt earnestness to rejoice, as though I rejoiced not, and to use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of it passeth away.

"To all your little ones commend me with much love. Agnes has already formed an attachment for them, and a most tender regard for their beloved mother. I long to see you together, for I know that your hearts will mingle at once.

"With the permission of Providence, I shall return early in May. Till then, and ever, I commit you to the keeping of our heavenly Father, and remain,

"With the purest affection, your friend,

"HERBERT ATHERTON."

The morning after the receipt of this epistle, Mr. James Waterford called to see his sister.

"I suppose you know," he said, with evident satisfaction, "that Mr. Atherton has accepted the rectorship of our parish, and that he is, with Divine permission, to take charge of it on the first Sunday after Easter. I heard some weeks since that there was reason to believe that he might bring back a lady with him to share and lighten his cares, and therefore proposed at the last vestry meeting that the rectory should be furnished before it was occupied. What do you think of that, Mary?"

"Excellent!" exclaimed his sister, with great enthusiasm. "I have been wondering how we should manage to get it fitted up for his reception. Rumor is for once correct, and Mr. Atherton will bring back a bride; but as she has little fortune at command, and Herbert none, I could not well see where the funds were to be procured. I should have offered to have advanced part of them myself; but I knew that it would give them

both pain should they discover that it cost me any sacrifice to provide for their comfort. Now the way is clear, and they will find a sweet home all in readiness for their reception."

"I hope so," responded Mr. Waterford. "I have come this very morning to ask your aid in selecting such furniture as you think would please our new rector. From his refined appearance and manners, I fancy that he has been used to something more than comfort, and will need a few little elegancies to make him feel quite at home, especially after living with you, Mary."

Mrs. Waterford smiled at this idea.

"Herbert has been accustomed," she said, "it is true, to the luxuries of life; but he has very rigid ideas with regard to Christian plainness and simplicity of living, and especially of the duty of a clergyman to set an example in this respect. Were the rectory to be furnished with any attempt at elegance, he would only grieve to see money thus wasted."

"Well, now I like that," said Mr. Waterford, warmly. "I am beginning to think, Mary, that you are not so far out of the way in considering Mr. Atherton quite a paragon. I hope that I shall not be disappointed in the high opinion that I have formed of his character. The vestry are



all so pleased with what they hear of him, that they are anxious to do every thing in their power for his comfort. They have already raised a thousand dollars to furnish the rectory, and if more is wanted I am willing to supply the deficiency."

"I hope that we shall be able to procure every thing needful for that sum, as I presume that you only intend to place such articles in the rectory as will be fixtures. Mrs. Atherton will no doubt prefer to provide her own table-furniture and linen; and as she is an only child, I presume that she has in her possession that which belonged to her mother. I will go out with you on this pleasant errand as soon as I have heard Frank's lessons. I know that he will be expeditious when he learns the nature of my engagement, so that if you come for me in two hours, I shall probably be at leisure."

Mrs. Waterford's judgment was as good as her heart was warm, and in a few weeks the rectory at Holmwood was furnished in the most refined taste, but with beautiful simplicity.

"This study would be complete now, if these bookcases were only filled," she said, "as she stood looking around the room especially devoted to the new rector with great complacency. Her-

bert is not likely to be able to purchase a library very soon; for if he ever does buy a book, he always gives it away to the first person he meets to whom it may be of service."

"We shall have to put some green curtains over the shelves to hide their emptiness, said Mr. Waterford, smiling, "or buy a set of wooden books to look respectable."

"Now don't laugh about it, James," said Mrs. Waterford, who felt annoyed at the dilemma in which she was placed by the poverty of the new rector. She remained silent for some moments, while adjusting the portraits of the four oldest American Bishops, with which she had, herself, adorned the walls, and then asked with great earnestness, "Did you not say that a considerable sum had been raised for the purchase of a parish library?"

"Certainly, but how will that obviate your difficulty? You do not wish me to sequester that fund, my dear Mary, do you?"

"No, only make it serve two purposes," she said, eagerly. "Who could be a better librarian than Mr. Atherton? and where could be a more suitable place for the books to be kept than at the Rectory? The clergyman could thus, in a degree, regulate the reading of the people,

and become acquainted with their wants and tastes."

"You ladies have always a way of making whatever you wish appear so plausible, that you are very hard to deal with," rejoined Mr. Waterford. "The library is not yet purchased, and ought to be selected with deliberation and care; so that at all events these bookcases would have to remain empty for the present."

"But that is no matter," she replied with great animation. "Herbert could select the books as they were required, adding from time to time such valuable theological works as might be useful to himself, or to any one who might succeed him in the rectorship. A minister always needs a good library as much as his people do, and most of our clergymen enter upon their professional duties without any money at their command, and have afterwards such limited salaries, that the purchase of books is a heavy item of expense. It would be an excellent plan to have a library of standard works part of the furniture of every rectory, and I do not see why such a one could not be united with that intended for the use of the parish."

"You decidedly think that you have hit upon a capital idea, Mary," said Mr. Waterford, who,

though amused at his sister's enthusiasm, respected her judgment most sincerely. "But how think you that Mrs. Atherton would like having her husband's study invaded by his parishioners whenever they were in need of a book from the library?"

"Now, James, don't put up any more men of straw for me to knock down. Herbert would never choose a wife who would make the slightest objection to any plan for his comfort, or the good of his parishioners. I shall rely upon your proposing at the next vestry meeting, to appoint the rector librarian of the parish library, and to have it placed in his study."

Although the rectory was now furnished, it needed for its completeness those little articles of personal property which give to every dwelling a home-like character. Mrs. Waterford had placed a pretty work-basket, filled with implements for sewing and knitting upon the tasteful little stand which adorned one corner of the parlor, and some neatly bound volumes upon the table between the low window-seats; but still there was one spot in the room which looked unfurnished. She sat down upon a couch, covered with neat chintz, matching exactly the green carpet, which was of the most delicate

and graceful pattern, and looked disconsolately at what seemed to her a desolate-looking recess in the pretty parlor.

Just at this crisis the door opened, and Harry Melville entered, as if he were not aware that the house was occupied by any one but himself. He looked very much embarrassed, and apologized heartily for the intrusion.

"I came," he said, "on what was intended to be a secret errand, but I shall have to take you into my confidence to apologize for my rudeness."

Mrs. Waterford assured him that no such penance would be necessary. But he persisted in telling her the object of his visit, as he needed her counsel and taste.

"I have been wishing," he said, "to place some memorial of my gratitude in Mr. Atherton's new home, and thought perhaps that a parlor organ might not be an unacceptable gift. Miss Cameron is a fine musician, and must, I am sure, be fond of an instrument appropriated to sacred melodies. Do you think that there would be room here for any thing of the kind?"

"Just the thing I should have wished," said Mrs. Waterford warmly. "I wonder that I did not think of it before. It was the want of some musical instrument that made this room look so



empty. I was looking at that very recess, and wishing that I had some larger article of furniture to put into it."

"I am glad," said Harry, in a less constrained manner, "that my proposal meets your approbation; but you must not tell Mr. Atherton that the organ was not placed here with the rest of the furniture."

Mrs. Waterford hesitated. "What shall I tell him if he asks the name of the donor?" she said, "for I am sure that he will know that the parish did not indulge in any such extravagance. It is very hard work for me to keep pleasant secrets."

"You need only say," replied Harry, with much feeling, "that it was a person who was deeply indebted to him. I shall not be designated by that description, for there are hundreds to whom it would apply."

"Well, I will try and not betray your confidence," said Mrs. Waterford. "I appreciate the feeling which thus seeks expression, and I am sure that any token of affection from you would give Herbert inexpressible pleasure."

A few days after this conversation a very neat and tasteful organ arrived at the rectory, and Mrs. Waterford then thought that every thing had been procured which was necessary to the

comfort of its new inmates. She wrote to Herbert to that effect, and proposed, as she knew it would be more agreeable to him, that he should take possession of his new residence as soon as he returned from the South. "The proposal, perhaps, may not seem a polite one from me," she said; "but I waive my claims to a visit in favor of a plan which I am sure you would prefer, and shall hope to welcome you to the rectory with the returning birds of spring."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## HOLMWOOD RECTORY.

“Since God doth often vessels make  
Of lowly matter for high uses meet,  
I throw me at his feet.”—HERBERT.

A NEW home! How full of meaning are these simple words! A place where the soul must be trained for eternity, and where it may encounter its sorest trials and its dearest joys. Surely the Christian's dwelling ought to be a temple in which there is perpetually offered a holy living sacrifice unto God. What is his whole life but a continuous act of service, which should consecrate every home in which he may dwell?

Such were the thoughts of Mrs. Waterford, as she sat, in the twilight of a pleasant evening in May, awaiting the arrival of the new inmates of Holmwood rectory. Every thing was prepared for their reception, and tea was in readiness to be served as soon as they should appear.

As the evening shadows grew darker, a spirit-

ual presence seemed to fill the vacant house, and mournful memories thronged to the mind of its lonely occupant. She remembered the time when she herself, a happy bride, had first entered a new home. How little she then dreamed of all which had since befallen her! and yet, in each sorrowful event of her life, mercy had tempered judgment.

Mrs. Waterford was interrupted in these mournful reflections by the sound of an approaching carriage, and, forgetting her own grief in sympathy with the joy of others, she flew to the door to welcome the travellers.

Herbert sprang to the ground, and, after greeting her with the affection of a son, lifted his young wife from the carriage, and presented her to his friend, saying,

“Here is my precious Agnes, who has already learned to love my second mother.”

The warm kiss and tender embrace with which she was received were too much for the already overflowing heart of the fair bride. She followed her husband into the house with a tottering step, and the moment that she entered the home-like looking parlor, threw herself into his arms, and wept like a child. Herbert led her gently to the couch, and sat folding her to his breast

with a look of unspeakable tenderness and affection.

This scene was more than Mrs. Waterford could bear. She quietly stole from the room, and sought some place where she might shed in secret the tears which never more could be wiped away by the hand of a loving husband.

"What is it that overcomes you thus?" asked Herbert, as the sweet face which had been hid in his bosom was lifted up to his own, with an expression of child-like dependence.

"Oh, I am so unworthy and so blest!" said Agnes, smiling through her tears.

A closer pressure of that clasping arm was the only reply, for Herbert was struggling with the same melting thought.

There was a long pause broken only by the throbbing of full hearts, which could find no utterance for their deep emotions.

"We call this our home," said Herbert, at last, with tender seriousness; "but we must never forget, Agnes, that it has been prepared for our use by God's people, because we are to minister to them of spiritual things; and is, therefore, in a peculiar manner devoted to his service. Let us try and view it as an outer court of the temple, which we are permitted to occupy while



attending upon its worship. I include you, dearest, with myself in my holy office, because though its active labors will devolve upon me, I shall look to you for aid and encouragement in preparing myself for every duty."

"You will lean upon a reed," said Agnes, pensively, while her eyes filled and her cheek glowed with emotion. She was indeed a fragile being, the blood flushing and fading in her transparent face with every change of thought and feeling.

"I will try and not lean so heavily as to crush you, my beloved," he said fondly, "and I trust that we shall support each other. It seems to me that I shall be able to bear much more, now that I have some one to whom I may safely communicate the plans and cares which were once so oppressive. It will not be violating the confidence of others to share it with my own precious wife, and your woman's tact will be invaluable in pointing out means for their encouragement and relief. We are very comfortable here," he added, looking around the pleasant room with a gratified air. "I like this furniture because it is not only tasteful, but enduring, so that it may serve equally well for those who shall come after us. We must take excellent care of

these loans, Agnes, that they may be transmitted to our successors uninjured, when we shall need them no more."

The expression of the young clergyman's fine countenance showed that he was thinking of the time when they should enter into possession of a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"My spirit cannot always keep pace with yours," said Agnes, somewhat sadly, as she saw the celestial peace with which her husband's soul was filled by this animating thought. "Earth is very pleasant to me now, and I do not like to think at this moment how soon we may be called upon to leave it."

"Ah, dearest," he replied tenderly, "it will not always be thus. You will learn to feel by and by, as all God's children do in due time, that you are a stranger and sojourner upon earth, and to look joyfully towards that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We cannot now tell by what teaching we shall be fitted for that holy habitation; but I trust that whenever our summons comes, we shall hear it with rejoicing."

When Mrs. Waterford returned to the parlor, she found that Agnes had laid aside her hat and

shawl, and was running her fingers over the keys of the new organ with evident pleasure. "I am very fond of this instrument," said the young wife, "and so glad to find it here. Am I indebted for this pleasure to any particular person, or is it a fixture, like the rest of the furniture?"

"No," said Mrs. Waterford, smiling, "it was placed here for your especial use as a token of gratitude, from a person who is deeply indebted to your husband. Pray ask me no further questions, for I am forbidden to mention the name of the donor."

A glance of quick intelligence passed between Herbert and his wife, for the same suspicion had flashed through both their minds.

"Poor Harry! That was so like him," exclaimed the former. "He knows how fond you are of music, Agnes, and that I could not at present afford to gratify your taste. How I long to see him!"

"Mr. Melville was here a short time before your arrival, looking so well that I doubt whether you would have known him," said Mrs. Waterford. "He is studying very hard, I hear, and leads a most consistent life."

"God be thanked!" ejaculated Herbert,

with deep feeling. "He was lost, and he is found."

Here was a pause for some moments, which was interrupted by Mrs. Waterford's saying, "I quite forgot that I came hither to you to announce that tea was ready. Allow me to show you the way to the dining-room."

When the first happy meal at the rectory was concluded, Agnes accompanied Mrs. Waterford in an exploration of the house, and was made acquainted with its different arrangements for her convenience and comfort.

"And now," said her kind friend, as they returned to the parlor, "I must leave you, my dear child, for Frank will be quite in despair at my prolonged stay. Herbert has, I presume, found the way to his study. Bid him good night for me, and tell him that I shall be here to-morrow to aid you in receiving such of your parishioners as shall then pay their respects. I thought that you would prefer to be quite alone this evening."

Agnes smiled a grateful acquiescence, and warmly returned the parting salutation of her new friend. Then she seated herself in one of the low window-seats, and gave herself up to her own sweet thoughts.

Herbert had, as Mrs. Waterford suspected, found his way to the room appropriated to his own especial use. His eye fell upon the writing materials which had been placed upon the table to give the study an inhabited air, and he thought to what purpose they would be applied. Here would the sermons be written upon which might hang the destiny of myriads of immortal souls. Here, must his own spirit be prepared for the guidance of those who were placed under his charge. His whole subsequent usefulness might depend upon the manner in which he improved the hours here spent. In this place he was to receive the messages which he must proclaim to the world. His whole future life, with its momentous responsibility, seemed spread out before his view.

“Who is sufficient for these things?” was his mental ejaculation, as he took a rapid survey of the difficulties which beset the path of every faithful ambassador of Christ. He had studied his own heart faithfully, and knew its deep depravity, and therefore it was that he sometimes labored almost without hope, in trying to wake the slumbering souls of his fellow-men. Would any of his parishioners rise up in the judgment-day to condemn him, and their



blood be upon his head? This was a terrible question. Even the faithful discharge of his ministry might add to the guilt of some, who would see, but perceive not, and hear what they made no effort to understand.

It was not singular that, overwhelmed with a sense of the responsibility with which he was intrusted, Herbert fell upon his knees, and poured out his very soul in prayer. He was conscious of no presence in the universe but that of his Maker, and no relationship but that which existed between a merciful God and his frail ambassador to a ruined world. Wrapt in devotion, he pleaded, with a broken voice, that while he preached to others, he might not himself be a castaway.

It was long before the earnest suppliant for divine grace became aware that some one was kneeling at his side. With half unconsciousness, he passed his arm around the slight figure of his young wife, and commending her also to the mercy of their heavenly Father, fervently asked that they might both view their union only as a means of advancing his glory.

We cannot accompany the devoted clergyman in his subsequent career of usefulness. With an earnest heart and an eye fixed upon heaven, he

continued "in the morning to sow his seed, and in the evening to withhold not his hand," looking for no harvest-time till the angels should gather their sheaves into the garner of the Lord. Where there was the greatest spiritual dearth, he yet found some green spot beside a scanty brook, where a seed might be dropped in faith, though he never again might pass that way to discover whether it had germinated. Sorrow came to his home and to his heart, and death carried from his arms his first-born son; but even beside its dark flood, he fearlessly cast in the grain. No human being, while life lasted, was too depraved to enlist his earnest sympathy, and to claim his hopes, his efforts, and his prayers.

The sanctified spirit of Herbert Atherton was dismissed from its frail tenement at the same early age at which his Saviour terminated his earthly career of love and mercy. Like him, he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; for through him, he was appointed to offer continual intercession for the sins of a dying world. And now he sleeps in peace, with his faithful wife at his side; but the land is white with the harvests that they planted together. What is it to them that they sometimes went forth weeping to sow their seed, if, when the ransomed of the

Lord shall return to Zion, they come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them?

"Blessed indeed are ye who sow beside all waters!"

**THE END.**

## The Old Man's Home.

"This is a narrative of an 'Old Man' of ninety-six years, whom the writer first meets in a romantic dell, on the coast of the Isle of Wight, and in whose mind the one all-engrossing thought, which took complete possession of every feeling and sympathy of his nature, was that of his final *Home*. His residence in the asylum for half a century, his literal interpretation of the precepts and promises of God's Holy Word, his reputed insanity, his allegorical conversation, his attachment to 'little Annie,' his past history and bereavements, his death, and his resting-place in the church-yard, are incidents which the gifted author has woven into a story told with great simplicity and effect. The illustrations of the engraver are as tastefully executed as the designs (which are original with the Union) are happily conceived. We are not surprised at the popularity of Mr. Adams' books."

[*Church Review.*

\* \* \* \* \* "If it is not true, there is an air of truth about it which is unequalled except by De Foe. But whether truth or fiction, it is one of the most instructive little books we know of; and one, to the tendencies of which we can give the most unreserved recommendation."

[*True Catholic.*

"'The Old Man's Home' is by the author of 'The Shadow of the Cross,' and may well take place by its side as a companion volume. The title plainly indicates the subject. Devoid of the slightest approach to rant or turgidity, the touching and simple story is told with much purity and grace of style; and the interest which is early excited, is sustained, without flagging, to the very last page. Let a book like this be put into the hands of a child, and we have no fear of the result."

[*Literary World.*

## The Distant Hills.

"We have before us a little work entitled, 'The Distant Hills; An Allegory,' from the press of the General Protestant Episcopal Sunday-School Union, whose Depository is at Number 20 John-street. It is a most touching and tender allegory, and is altogether worthy of its predecessor, 'The Shadow of the Cross.' Over the pages of these narratives there is shed an aroma of purity, suited to the pictures which they so exquisitely paint. Indeed, the pictures themselves seem to be rather *breathed* than painted. We know not how to express our sincere admiration, as we believe it would be impossible to meet with works of this kind more charmingly conceived and finished. They ought to be widely circulated among the young, in whose pure hearts they would be engraved indelibly in days when the feverish novel would interest them no more. As allegories they possess the highest merit. The outlines are distinct, the accessories replete with classic grace, and the embodiment of the *truth* palpable. The *Distant Hills*, bedecked with green and rife with melody; the *Crumbling Ruin*, crawled over by the green lizard, and given to decay; these are symbols which a *child's* heart may interpret, and over which a man's eyes may weep. And it is delightful to see ever in the foreground of the pictures, whether meandering in the meadow or gushing from the rock, the purifying waters of the flood, over which

—'The eternal dove  
Hovers on softest wing.'

"For the Christian parent, these works, so pure and happy in influence, so exquisite in embellishment, so compressed in compass, are most desirable for *gifts*. They would be received with smiles, and perused with tears, and gratitude would be returned by the intermingling of both."

[Knickerbocker, Oct., 1849.



## BEAUTIFUL JUVENILE BOOKS

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"In connection with Book Notices, we cannot forbear calling public attention to the publications of the Protestant Episcopal Sunday-School Union,—an institution intended, of course, mainly for the advancement of the denomination with which it is connected; but conducted on the most catholic principles of universal charity; and with a degree of intelligence and ability not always exhibited in similar organizations. In addition to school books, and others intended mainly for instruction, they have issued a series of elegant *Gift Books*, very neatly printed, and sold at a moderate price. Some of these are Allegories, tales, and personal or historical sketches; and are not only sound in Christian sentiment, and in the influence they exert, but are among the most admirably winning and attractive books we have ever seen. **The Old Man's Home**—to characterize all by reference to one, is one of the most pathetic and touching little books we have ever read; exquisitely delicate in conception and simple in style. The whole series is of the same character, and forms one of the most delightful collections of the kind ever issued. No greater service could be rendered to children than to fill their minds with the sweet thoughts, the lovely affections, and the holy aspirations which flow from these little books, like perfume from flowers. We ask the attention of all who have young minds and hearts to provide for, to the publications of the Union."

[*New-York Courier and Enquirer*

## The Widow's Son.



A very interesting Story, re-published from the Edition of  
THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE. It  
shows vividly the peril of yielding to the temptations which  
beset our path.









